Evaluation Reports

Interim Evaluation of the National Literacy Program

Program Evaluation Directorate

Strategic Policy and Research

Human Resources and Social Development Canada

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Interim Evaluation of the National Literacy Program

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Evaluation Directorate
Strategic Policy and Research
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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the interim evaluation of the National Literacy Program (NLP) conducted between July 2005 and December 2006.

The purpose of this interim evaluation was to acquire information to help strengthen or improve the overall performance and outcomes of the NLP. The evaluation examined issues related to:

- Rationale and Relevance;
- Implementation:
  - Program Utilization and Reach;
  - Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness; and
  - Performance Measurement.
- Success:
  - Achievement of NLP Objectives;
  - Initial Learner Impacts; and
  - Initial Capacity Building.

In addition, the interim evaluation was intended to:

- Determine whether sufficient data was being collected to inform the summative evaluation and identify opportunities for improvement to fill any potential gaps;
- Assess whether the changes brought to the logic model following the 2002 evaluation, including the clarification of the program definitions, objectives, and targets, made achievement of NLP objectives more measurable; and
- Assess whether new data collection requirements and methodologies have been put into place since the 2002 evaluation to ensure that both short and long-term outcomes, including changes made since the 2002 summative evaluation, can be measured.

Finally, the interim evaluation assessed NLP performance in relation to commitments made in the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) Management Response to the 2002 summative evaluation, including:

- Increasing the transparency of funding decisions;
- Increasing the accessibility of projects and project results;
- Simplifying the funding application process;

- Increasing the reliability and credibility of local research projects;
- Increasing the usage of contributions; and
- Developing a framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy.

Program Background

The NLS was formed in 1988 to ensure that Canadians have opportunities to develop and improve the ever-expanding literacy skills needed to function at work, at home and in the community, and to support the development and dissemination of information on literacy issues to increase awareness and understanding.

The NLS did not deliver programs directly, but provided financial and technical assistance for activities that promoted its goals. The grants and contributions program, administered through the NLP, was the main instrument used to engage key partners in literacy projects.

The NLP's annual grants and contributions budget ranged from $27.5 million to $38.4 million between 2002 and 2005. NLP funding was provided for five categories of eligible activities: Learning Materials, Access and Outreach, Coordination and Information, Public Awareness, and Research.

On April 1, 2006, Human Resources and Social Development Canada's (HRSDC) three existing adult learning and literacy grants and contributions programs (The National Literacy Program, the Office of Learning Technologies and the Learning Initiatives Program) were integrated under the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESP). This integrated program enhances HRSDC's capacity to respond to the needs of its key partners and communities across Canada in the area of adult learning, literacy and essential skills. The integration is expected to result in efficiency and effectiveness gains through improved co-ordination of program activities, streamlined procedures and better allocation of resources. The current interim evaluation of the NLP was designed prior to the creation of ALLESP. The evaluation methodology was therefore not affected by this change. However, results from the current evaluation will no longer lead to a summative evaluation of the NLP but will be used to inform a future evaluation of ALLESP.

Evaluation Scope and Methodology

This evaluation focused on the fiscal years 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 of the program. It is based on multiple lines of evidence including: an administrative data review, preliminary key informant interviews with NLP representatives (n=7), a review of documents and literature, an online survey of NLP funding recipients (n=191), project case studies (n=20), organisation case studies (n=6), a province/territory case study in Prince Edward Island, an online survey of NLP project end-users (n=69), an expert panel that examined a sample of eleven NLP-funded products, and phone interviews with unfunded organisations (n=2). An iterative approach was taken to integrate the methodologies so that each data collection activity would build upon the others.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Rationale and Relevance

Program Consistency with Needs and Priorities: Evidence shows that the NLP's support to developing literacy awareness, programming and access across Canada is compatible with both the federal government's and HRSDC's priorities pertaining to inclusive participation of all Canadians in our new learning society and knowledge-based economy.

While the program does not address the needs expressed by literacy stakeholders for long-term core funding of literacy programming, it provides funding for coordination and networking, awareness and promotion and research, areas literacy stakeholders identified as needing federal government support. The allocation of NLP funds is compatible with the varied needs of the literacy community given its responsive partnership approach to setting funding priorities and the flexible definition of its five activity areas. Also, there appears to be few alternative sources of funding, in the areas examined, for literacy capacity building, coordination and program development. As such, the NLP plays a unique and necessary role.

Relevance of Federal Government Role in Literacy: Overall, evidence shows that a need remains for federal government intervention in the field of adult literacy, particularly as an initiator, promoter and supporter of national initiatives and innovative partnerships among various stakeholders. The NLP's contribution to literacy appears to be compatible and complementary to the role played by provinces, this complementarity being ensured by the effective partnership approach adopted. In this sense, this program does not appear to be a candidate for realignment with the provinces.

Implementation

Program Utilization and Reach: Some evidence shows that the NLP's direct interventions reach a wide variety of stakeholders, particularly literacy organisations, non-profit service organisations and indirectly through funded project outputs, literacy practitioners and learners, including youth, families, and seniors from various Canadian provinces. The program has taken a responsive approach[1] to addressing local literacy needs and, as such, did not set specific targets for the reach of its activities. Furthermore, no data is being collected by the program on the actual end-users of NLP-funded activities, thereby preventing an accurate assessment of its reach.

Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness: Program eligibility criteria are clearly outlined in the application package and neither NLP representatives nor funding recipients expressed having particular issues with this component of program implementation.

[1] Responsive approach means that the NLP has made funding decision in reaction or in response to needs and priorities expressed by the stakeholders rather than based on set priorities and criteria.

NLP's approach to determining priorities and distributing funding also appears to be appropriate for achieving its intended immediate outcomes given that it funds projects in each of its five target categories using project selection criteria that are based on local needs and priorities, and established in collaboration with each province/territory. NLP and PEI government representatives find this approach appropriate, given jurisdictional realities. Funding recipients from organisations case studies were, however, generally unaware of the process, thereby indicating that the program could be more explicit in its information regarding selection of projects. In the same way, only 57% (out of 191) of funding recipient survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the transparency of the proposal review process and 54% with the timeliness of the funding approval process.

Performance Measurement: Although the NLP collects information that could be used to assess the performance of the projects it funds, it does not currently have a specific set of performance measures against which the results of its activities and funded projects could be measured, thereby limiting NLP's performance measurement and reporting capacity. Furthermore, the program does not have a system in place to systematically store and use project performance information. In the absence of such a system, the NLP has limited ability to measure and report on whether it is achieving its objectives. The decision not to pursue initial steps to implement a performance measurement system was attributed in part to Senior Management's desire to focus on the new ALLESP, for which a performance measurement system is being developed. No evidence was found that performance evidence is being used for program or management decision-making purposes on an ongoing basis.

Success

Achievement of NLP Objectives: Evidence shows that the NLP is contributing to meeting its objectives of supporting the production and utilisation of quality and useful literacy tools and materials, improvements in accessibility and dissemination of literacy services and resources, the application of literacy best practices, and the creation of strategic partnerships.

NLP project outputs included literacy tools and materials, research reports, partnerships with other organisations, and awareness raising and promotional events and products. These were generally considered good quality and highly useful by practitioner end-users, while some products, especially research reports, were seen by literacy experts to be of low quality and relevance.

NLP-funded products are being used by a wide variety of individuals, including literacy professionals and learners, for a wide range of purposes including improving current literacy training practices and developing new literacy training programs and tools. Strategic partnerships, for leveraging additional funding and/or for sharing expertise and resources, are also a key feature of all projects examined.

There was weaker evidence of NLP-funded activities contributing to increased public awareness and learner participation, in part due to the absence of data on the number and profile of project end-users. Some limitations were also found in the NLP's mechanisms to promote accessibility and dissemination of tools and materials. While the program expects projects to disseminate their project results and encourages posting of funded products on the National Adult Literacy Database[2] (NALD) and various provincial literacy websites, this is not systematically done and the NLP does not have a formal mechanism for rolling up the lessons learned and best practices developed by its funded projects.

Initial Learner Impacts: In the absence of specific data on the learners who benefited from NLP-funded products, anecdotal evidence was collected from funded organisations and from literacy practitioners who witnessed first hand the positive impacts of these products on a variety of individuals. While not every project examined entailed impacts on learners, some examples recorded include improvement of studying and literacy skills among youth and increased motivation to return to school, which led to completion of high school or school credits for several as well as increased confidence in learning and self-esteem gained by learners as part of their literacy activities.

Initial Capacity Building: Evidence was collected of the NLP's contribution to capacity building. The NLP's support to national literacy organisations, its influence in promoting new emerging areas such as workplace and family literacy, and its support and encouragement for the creation of strategic partnerships have been recognized by stakeholders in all categories. A majority of funding recipients surveyed also reported that their project would not have been implemented without NLP funding. Examples of positive impacts of NLP funding on funded organisations include the ability to secure long-term and ongoing funding and support from other sources and increased visibility, credibility and recognition of the organisation at the provincial and national levels. Impacts of funded projects on literacy practitioners include increased capacity to serve their clientele, most notably through partnership building and networking opportunities, as well as increased access to relevant training tools and best practices.

Targeting of Families in Official Language Minority Communities: Sixteen projects were funded under the Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) Family Literacy Initiative between 2003-2004 and 2005-2006. However, it remains too early to draw conclusions on the success of this initiative, given that funded projects remain in the early stages of their implementation. Project descriptions indicate that funding was targeted towards the development of networks, organisational and programming capacity, research, and promotion of family literacy in each of the provinces and at the national level through the work of the FCAF[3]. This is consistent with the focus intended by the Family Literacy Initiative.

[2] NALD serves as a resource for technological development in literacy and has developed an internet-based information service for literacy policy and practice.

[3] *Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français.*

Other Findings and Conclusions

Whether Sufficient Data Was Collected to Inform an Eventual Summative Evaluation: An eventual summative evaluation would benefit from data on the products and, if still desirable, on end-users of the projects funded by the program. This data was not systematically collected and recorded by the program.

Changes to Logic Model: Intended revisions have been made to the program logic model, better reflecting the linkages between its activities and expected outcomes and proposing outcomes that better reflect the program's levels of accountability. However, in order to fully meet the intent of these changes, which is to make achievement of NLP objectives more measurable, the program would have needed to approve performance indicators and targets for each expected outcome.

Requirements and Methodologies in Place to Ensure Measurability of Outcomes: No system is in place to ensure the measurability of program outcomes. This system would have required detailed performance measures and a mechanism for systematically collecting information on project outputs and, if possible and desirable, on end-users.

More Transparent Funding Decisions: Feedback collected from funding recipients indicates that the process for making funding decisions is unknown to many and an aspect of the program's implementation garnering one of the lowest satisfaction ratings.

Increasing the Accessibility of Projects Results: While the NLP has put in place a number of measures to increase accessibility of project results, posting of project outputs on NALD and other provincial websites is not systematically done. The NLP does not have a formal mechanism for rolling up the lessons learned and best practices developed by its funded projects.

Simplifying the Funding Application Process: Improvements were brought to the NLP application process, namely the posting of application forms and instruction on the NLP website, which appear to have addressed a majority of funding recipients' concerns in this respect. However, 14% (out of 191)[4] of surveyed funding recipients remain dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the simplicity of the funding application process.

Steps Taken To Increase the Reliability and Credibility of Local Research Projects: Although a study was commissioned by the NLP to examine the research reports funded between 1998 and 2003, no evidence was found that the NLP has implemented changes to its approach in funding research projects to increase their reliability and credibility.

[4] Number in bracket following a survey result in percentage represents the total number of respondents for this specific question.

Increasing the Usage of Contributions: The NLP has established an informal guideline for contributions to be used for funding national organisations (except for the National Indigenous Literacy Association) and for projects of $350,000 or more, with the aim of reaching a proportion of 22% contributions. The proportion of contribution projects has increased to 11% in 2004-2005, while the proportion of contribution funding has increased to 22%. However, there is no evidence that the shift operated towards increased use of contributions has had the intended effect of increasing project accountability for results. It has however increased the administrative burden on NLP staff and funding recipients, while increasing the length of the project approval process.

Developing a Framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy: A framework for a pan-canadian literacy strategy was presented in 2005 as part of the report "Towards a Fully Literate Canada. Achieving National Goals through a Comprehensive Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy,"[5] thereby addressing NLS commitments. No evidence was found, however, that the proposed framework or any of the reports' recommendations were to date adopted or implemented.

[5] Presented by the Advisory Committee on Literacy and Essential Skills to the Minister of State for Human Resources Development in November 2005.

Management Response

Introduction

An interim evaluation of the National Literacy Program (NLP) was conducted between July 2005 and December 2006. The purpose of this interim evaluation was to acquire information to help strengthen or improve the overall performance and outcomes of the NLP.

More specifically, the evaluation considered the NLP's relevance, implementation and levels of success. It also sought to determine the extent to which the NLP had met the commitments made following the 2002 evaluation: increasing the transparency of funding decisions; increasing the accessibility of projects and project results; simplifying the funding application process; increasing the reliability and credibility of local research projects; increasing the usage of contribution funding relative to grants; and developing a framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy.

While the evaluation was underway, NLP underwent a significant change. On April 1, 2006, the NLP, the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) and the Learning Initiatives Program (LIP) were integrated into a single cohesive program, the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESP). The ALLESP was created to enhance focus, strengthen capacity and improve results measurement in HRSDC's adult learning and literacy activities.

In line with the September 25, 2006 effective spending measures announcement, the ALLESP re-targeted its investments towards national priorities and areas of clear federal responsibility. On April 11, 2007, as part of measures to support the objective of becoming a Centre of Excellence for the development and delivery of human resources and social development policies and programs, the National Office of Literacy Learning (NOLL), which administered the ALLESP was moved from the Learning Branch to the new Skills and Employment Branch. A new Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) was created which brings together the Essential Skills Initiative (ESI) and NOLL. OLES will provide a national knowledge base of best practices, models and applied research, as well as practical tools and instruments that support and strengthen partnerships in literacy and essential skills programs. OLES will also have responsibility for Grants and Contributions programming, including ALLESP.

Findings and Responses

Overall, the NLP was found to be compatible with both the federal government's and HRSDC's priorities with respect to the inclusive participation of all Canadians in the knowledge-based economy. The NLP provided funding for areas literacy stakeholders identified as needing federal government support, such as coordination and networking, awareness and promotion, and research. Anecdotal evidence collected from funded organizations and literacy pratictioners shows learners benefitted from the program by strengthening or developing new skills, becoming motivated to further their learning and improving their ability to function effectively in society. There also exists strong

evidence of the NLP's contribution to capacity building in the literacy field, notably for funded organizations and literacy practitioners. With few alternative sources of funding, the NLP plays a unique and necessary role in literacy in Canada.

The key evaluation findings and respective responses to each are laid out below. In some cases, the OLES has initiated actions within the ALLESP that respond to the findings, in other cases, the evaluator's recommendations have been overtaken by wider departmental or governmental events.

Relevance

1. ***Program Consistency with Needs and Priorities:*** *The NLP was found to be consistent with both the needs and the priorities of the literacy community and the Government of Canada*.

   The ALLESP continues to respond to these priorities in its capacity as a program that supports the development of literacy and essential skills. Literacy and essential skills are key to building Canada's Knowledge Advantage, which aims to create the best-educated, most-skilled and most flexible workforce in the world.

   ALLESP funding is allocated to projects that contribute to the development of literacy and essential skills in and for the workplace, and that help Canadians develop the literacy skills they need for all aspects of family and community life. Following the Government of Canada's commitment in the 2006 Speech from the Throne to improve opportunity for all Canadians, the 2007 ALLESP Call for Proposals gives priority to projects that have as their subject Aboriginal Canadians, immigrants, Official Language Minority Communities and/or lower-skilled workers.

   The OLES will become a "centre of expertise" to improve literacy and essential skills for Canadians. To complement ALLESP funding, OLES will work to address the literacy and essential skills needs of Canadians in areas of direct federal responsibility by building on federal strengths and complementing the efforts of others.

2. ***Relevance of Federal Government Role in Literacy:*** *The evaluation found that NLP filled the need for federal government intervention in the field of adult literacy, as an initiator, promoter and supporter of national initiatives and innovative partnerships. In addition, it was found that the NLP's role in this field was compatible and complementary to that of the provinces and territories.*

   Continuing this national role in literacy, the ALLESP creates opportunities for adults to improve their literacy and essential skills. Projects under the ALLESP will be results-oriented and will focus on literacy and essential skills as they build the knowledge base, develop support mechanisms or carry out outreach activities to prepare people for work or improve the health of families and vitality of communities.

Implementation

3. ***Program Utilization and Reach:*** *NLP direct interventions were found to reach a variety of stakeholders. Because the program was guided by stakeholders in defining and addressing literacy problems, it did not establish targets at the outset.*

   It is necessary for a literacy program to be needs-based and, as such, ALLESP policies and programs will continue to be developed based on research and intelligence received outlining the needs of the literacy community. The research OLES and its stakeholders conduct on the needs of Canadians will now, however, be used to inform the program's targets. A new performance measurement framework is being developed that will quantify targets.

   The ALLESP also funds projects that build sustainable networks and partnerships among literacy and essential skills stakeholders, maximizing the engagement of learners and extending the program's reach.

4. ***Use of Contributions Agreements Relative to Grants:*** *The NLP increased its use of contribution agreements but this did not have the desired effect of increasing NLP project accountability for results because no clear targets were established. Instead, it increased the administrative burden on NLP staff and funding recipients, while increasing the length of the project approval process.*

   It is recognized that the project approval process is longer for contribution agreements than for grants. In addition, contribution agreements require funding recipients to submit quarterly financial and activities reports. While more monitoring is required during contribution projects, the additional work required will facilitate ongoing improvements in the quality of projects, greater accountability and results measurement. In order to foster improved results measurement with less administrative burden, a new reporting template is being developed by the OLES for projects resulting from the 2007 call for proposal (CFP). The information collected will be used to assess the performance of the wider ALLES program.

5. ***Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness:*** *Program eligibility criteria were found to be clearly outlined in the application package. It was also found that the program's six short-term aims were being met as a result of NLP's funding approach. However, the NLP's project selection processes were found to be unknown to funding recipients. Funding recipients in the organisation case studies indicated that they were unaware of the way NLP funding priorities are determined and funding distributed. Similarly, only 57% of survey respondents were satisfied with the transparency of the proposal review process.*

These issues have been addressed in documentation for the 2007 ALLESP Call for Proposals, which provides a description of the project selection process from receipt of funding application to Ministerial approval, and provides examples of selection criteria to be considered by the review committee. In addition, the CFP contains a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section which is regularly updated to reflect questions received. The CFP documents contain a toll-free number and an email link should potential applicants have further questions.

Before the CFP was launched, Senior Management at OLES held conference calls with provincial and territorial (P/T) government counterparts, P/T literacy coalitions and national literacy organizations to introduce the new OLES and its priorities, to explain the new CFP and to provide an opportunity for these groups to pose questions. During the course of the CFP, OLES officials visited each P/T and P/T partners and coalitions were encouraged to invite their key stakeholders to participate in the meetings and raise any issues they may have.

6. ***Performance Measurement:*** *The NLP did not have a performance measurement framework in place, and performance information was not used to inform management decision making processes.*

   The reason this was not done was because of the shift in focus to the development of the soon to be launched ALLESP, for which a performance measurement system would be developed.

   An initial performance measurement and evaluation framework was developed for the ALLESP, prior to the launch of the program in 2006. This framework is currently being updated to reflect the revised expected results of the program, subsequent to the April 2007 merger with ESI. The revised framework will be implemented in 2007-2008.

Success

Achievement of NLP Objectives

7. ***Reliability and credibility of research projects:*** *While a majority of NLP-funded project outputs were considered good quality and highly useful by end users consulted as part of the case studies, some products were seen by experts to be low in quality and relevance. Little evidence was found to suggest that the NLP took steps to increase the reliability and credibility of local research projects, despite Management Commitments made in response to the previous evaluation.*

   The OLES is beginning to synthesize existing research on literacy and essential skills issues faced by four key HRSDC target groups: Aboriginal Canadians, immigrants, official language minority communities and lower skilled workers. The results will be used to help ensure that future ALLESP-funded research projects support activities that address identified gaps, and contribute to cumulative knowledge development at the national level.

The evaluation found that NLP-funded research ran the risk of duplicating work done in other regions/communities and due to insufficient program monitoring, projects lacked the rigour necessary to be considered applied research. With the integration of multiple programs under the OLES, rigorous assessment and accountability is already in greater practice for ALLESP projects. As of April 11, 2007, all funding proposals submitted within the branch will be reviewed by a Director General-level internal review committee. This will help to ensure rigour in research projects.

To further encourage the reliability and credibility of funded projects, all project proposals submitted under an ALLESP Call for Proposals must include a citation of relevant literature to illustrate that the proposed project does not duplicate work that has already been done, to explain how it will build on previous work in an important and original way and to show that the applicant is familiar with the topic to be undertaken.

Furthermore, to help to direct and ensure the relevance of OLES research and policy development and to reduce duplication of research, national organizations and P/T coalitions are being asked to provide annual reports offering environmental scans, information on emerging issues and research being carried out across the country. This information will be provided through an agreement as a deliverable for multi-year operational contribution funding.

8. ***Insufficient collection of end-user data:*** *It was found that the NLP did not collect data on end users, which prevented an accurate assessment of the program's reach and of the extent to which NLP-funded activities contributed to increased public awareness and learner participation.*

   Given that the mission of the NLP was to "ensure that Canadians have opportunities to develop and improve the literacy skills needed to function at work, home and in the community", end-user data would have facilitated measurement of the program's success. The NLP, however, only had indirect access to project end-users and project funding recipients were often unwilling to disclose end-user contact information for confidentiality reasons. The Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) was involved in a feasibility study, under Phase I of the program's Summative Evaluation, to explore the collection of this type of data. Those involved encountered numerous difficulties, either because projects sponsors did not collect the information or did not want to share it for confidentiality reasons.

   The ALLESP will play an indirect role in helping adults improve their literacy and essential skills. The focus of the ALLESP will be on funding activities that build the knowledge base, develop effective support mechanisms and help build sustainable partnerships and networks that actively improve literacy and essential skills, rather than on direct provision of services to individuals. The recommendation on the collection of end-user data is no longer relevant in the context of the new focus of the ALLESP.

9. ***Lack of a formal mechanism for dissemination:*** *It was noted that while the NLP expected projects to disseminate their project results and encouraged posting of funded products on NALD and other websites, this was not systematically done and the program did not have a formal mechanism for rolling up the lessons learned and best practices developed by its projects for the benefit of all stakeholders.*

   Putting the tools and knowledge generated by projects into the hands of those who need them is one of the three key business lines of the OLES. OLES is developing a website on which will be posted tools developed for ALLESP stakeholders, ALLESP project descriptions and findings, research results, and news related to literacy and essential skills issues. An NLP project database is also being developed to be posted on the site. The database will provide sponsor information, project descriptions, expected results, lessons learned, etc. for projects funded under the NLP.

   OLES will also analyze the results of projects completed each fiscal year, based on sponsors' final reports. These syntheses will be posted on the OLES website, providing the public with a brief overview of the projects funded through the ALLESP, their lessons learned and their findings.

   In response to the lack of systematic dissemination by sponsors, proposals under the 2007 ALLESP CFP must include an active process for disseminating the results and/or final products to the targeted organizations. Posting on a website is not considered to be an active method of distribution, unless accompanied by active efforts to inform potential organizations about what is available on the website. Partnerships with other organizations and/or governments are encouraged in order to assist with disseminating results and products.

   In addition, as a condition for multi-year operational contribution funding, P/T coalitions and national organizations will provide OLES with a list of organizations to whom information, knowledge, tools and best practices will be disseminated.

Conclusion

To a great extent, the findings of the interim evaluation are already being incorporated into the ALLESP. The findings discussed above provide a target for improvements and contribute to the new program's work to improve accountability and results measurement. The evaluation lessons and recommendations will be integrated into the implementation evaluation of ALLESP, planned for 2008-2009.

1. Introduction and Context

This section provides a brief overview of the National Literacy Program (NLP) and a description of the context for the interim evaluation.

1.1 Program Description[6]

The federal government has had a long-standing involvement in literacy policy and program development, driven in large part by the recognition of the impact of literacy skills on the inclusion of individuals in society and the economy, and the broader impacts of literacy levels on overall societal, economic and labour market performance.

Since the late 1960s, the federal government has adopted an active and lead role in stimulating a modern labour market, in partnership with the provinces. The Department of the Secretary of State initially had responsibility for literacy policies and programming. This responsibility was eventually transferred to the then Department of Manpower and Immigration as part of developing an active employment policy in the late 1960s. Support for Basic Training for Skills Development and income assistance for individual trainees was provided through successive federal skills training programs, as part of this active labour market policy. Indeed, in at least some jurisdictions, the offering of literacy and academic upgrading programs for adults was largely shaped by federal policy and funding levels.

Beginning in the late 1970s, there was a growing concern about the amount of federal funds being expended on academic upgrading, programming that was clearly within provincial jurisdiction. This led to a move away from direct federal funding for literacy and academic upgrading program delivery. However, a full federal departure from this policy area would have left a considerable gap, given the need for new program development for the knowledge society, the growing need for research on literacy issues in various sectors and settings, and the particular literacy needs of groups facing barriers to social inclusion. In particular, the direct linkage of strong literacy skills with individual and overall labour market functioning was recognized and gave some urgency to shaping an appropriate federal role.

In this context, the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) was formed in 1988 to carry out an important leadership and "enhancement" role in research and program development and capacity building, a role it carried out in partnership with the other national organisations, the provinces and community-based organisations. The NLS mission was to ensure that Canadians have opportunities to develop and improve the ever-expanding literacy skills needed to function at work, at home and in the community, and to support

[6] Sources: Evaluation Terms of Reference; www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/lld/nls/GC/pdesc.htm; Treasury Board. Annex "A" Terms and Conditions For Grants and Contributions: National Literacy Program. 12 December 2004; The Governance Network. National Literacy Secretariat Draft Interim and Summative Evaluation Strategy. February 2005; RFP: Development of a Comprehensive Evaluation Framework for the Interim and Summative Evaluations of the NLS. 2004.

the development and dissemination of information on literacy issues to increase awareness and understanding. Its mandate was shaped by the following needs:

- Innovation: coordination of effort leading to efficiency and effectiveness in literacy applied research, innovation and sharing of the outcomes of this research – particularly with end-users;
- Access: promoting take-up and access to programs;
- Inclusiveness: addressing the specific needs of groups, such as Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, families, and those in the workplace;
- Policy coordination: playing a lead role in the development of a coherent literacy policy across federal government departments; and
- Communications and social marketing: promoting understanding of literacy issues.

The NLS did not deliver programs directly, but provided financial and technical assistance for activities that promoted its goals. The grants and contributions program, administered through the National Literacy Program (NLP), was the main instrument used to engage key partners in literacy projects.

The NLP had two key funding streams:

1. The Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Stream provided funds for community-based organisations based on joint federal/provincial/territorial priorities. Within this arrangement, the provinces and territories matched, if not exceeded, NLP spending.
2. The National Stream provided funds for projects with a national scope. Targeted stakeholders included national organisations, provincial coalitions, business and labour organisations, and non-literacy organisations, which were viewed as being able to bring the literacy community together and act as advocates for the issue while providing a forum for non-governmental interests.

NLP funding was provided for the following categories of eligible activities:

- The development of applied research in adult literacy (Research);
- The production of literacy information materials and tools (Learning Materials);
- Public awareness activities on literacy (Public Awareness);
- The development of literacy access and outreach measures and project initiatives (Access and Outreach); and
- Coordination and information sharing (Coordination and Information).

The expected outputs and immediate outcomes of the NLP correspond the above categories of eligible activities (see logic model in Appendix E). In addition, a sixth category of outputs and immediate outcomes pertains to the development and improvement of strategic literacy partnerships.

In addition, in 2003-2004, the NLP received increased funding to support the Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) Family Literacy Initiative targeting Francophone minority language communities for the development of culturally and linguistically suitable family literacy programs; the dissemination of a family literacy project inventory; and foundational and models training in family literacy for practitioners.

The NLP administrative database contained the following grants and contributions budget amounts for the years covered by the evaluation:

- 2002-2003: $27,527,975
- 2003-2004: $38,351,840
- 2004-2005: $28,138,162

On April 1, 2006, Human Resources and Social Development Canada's (HRSDC) three existing adult learning and literacy grants and contributions programs (the National Literacy Program, the Office of Learning Technologies and the Learning Initiatives Program) were integrated under the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESP). This integrated program enhances HRSDC's capacity to respond to the needs of its key partners and communities across Canada in the area of adult learning, literacy and essential skills. The integration is expected to result in efficiency and effectiveness gains through improved co-ordination of program activities, streamlined procedures and better allocation of resources. The current interim evaluation of the NLP was designed prior to the creation of ALLESP. The evaluation methodology was therefore not affected by this change. However, results from the current evaluation will no longer lead to a summative evaluation of the NLP but will be used to inform a future evaluation of ALLESP.

1.2 Evaluation Context

This report presents the results of the interim evaluation of the National Literacy Program[7] conducted between July 2005 and December 2006.

As part of Treasury Board's Policy on Transfer Payments, departments are required to produce Results-Based Management and Accountability Frameworks (RMAF) for their grants and contributions programs. The frameworks include provisions for periodic evaluations of these programs, including interim evaluations that aim to assess the programs' activities and immediate outcomes.

The purpose of this interim evaluation was to acquire information to help strengthen or improve the overall performance and outcomes of the NLP. The list below presents the evaluation issues retained to address this evaluation objective. A full evaluation matrix is included in Appendix A.

[7] Although the initial Terms of Reference for this evaluation referred to an Interim Evaluation of the NLS, this interim evaluation was intended to focus solely on the NLP. The title of the evaluation and the evaluation issues and questions were therefore adjusted accordingly.

Rationale and Relevance
RATIONALE AND RELEVANCE
Rationale and Relevance
1. Are the objectives, activities, outputs and desired outcomes of the NLP consistent with departmental, public policy, literacy community, and public needs and priorities?
2. Is there a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this program area or activity? Is the program a candidate for realignment with the provinces?
IMPLEMENTATION
Program Utilization and Reach
3. To what extent do NLP interventions reach targeted stakeholders and learners?
Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness
4. Are eligibility criteria clear and well understood?
5. Is the current approach to determining priorities and distributing funding the most efficient and effective way for NLP to achieve its objective?
Performance Measurement
6. Are performance measurement systems and monitoring strategies adequate to support the NLP in achieving its objective?
7. Is performance information being used for decision-making purposes on an ongoing basis?
SUCCESS
Achievement of NLP Objectives
8. Has the NLP made progress toward achieving its objective in each of its targeted activity areas?
Initial Learner Impacts
9. Does the NLP contribute to the achievement of stronger literacy skills or other impacts among learners?
Initial Capacity Building
10. Does the NLP contribute to increased capacity among stakeholders?

Furthermore, the NLP received increased funding in 2003-2004 to support the Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) Family Literacy Initiative. The following question was examined to assess the extent to which these activities were being implemented as intended:

- To what degree can HRSDC report on the literacy models and programs targeting families in Official Language Minority Communities?

In addition, the interim evaluation was intended to collect baseline information to feed into a summative evaluation and ensure that reporting mechanisms were in place to collect the data required in the summative evaluation. While this objective is no longer valid since the program no longer exists, the following questions were examined:

- Determine whether sufficient data was being collected to inform the summative evaluation and opportunities for improvement to fill any potential gaps;
- Assess whether the changes brought to the NLS logic model following the 2002 evaluation, including the clarification of the program definitions, objectives, and targets, made achievement of NLP objectives more measurable;[8] and
- Assess whether new data collection requirements and methodologies have been put into place since the 2002 evaluation to ensure that both short and long-term outcomes, including changes made since the 2002 summative evaluation, can be measured.

Finally, the interim evaluation assessed NLP performance in relation to commitments made in the NLS Management Response to the 2002 summative evaluation, including:

- Increasing the transparency of funding decisions;
- Increasing the accessibility of projects and project results;
- Simplifying the funding application process;
- Increasing the reliability and credibility of local research projects;
- Increasing the usage of contributions; and
- Developing a framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy.

[8] The logic model was to be revised to reflect the NLS' foundation as a partnership based model and to more clearly identify that the NLS is one of many players contributing to improving literacy skills of Canadians.

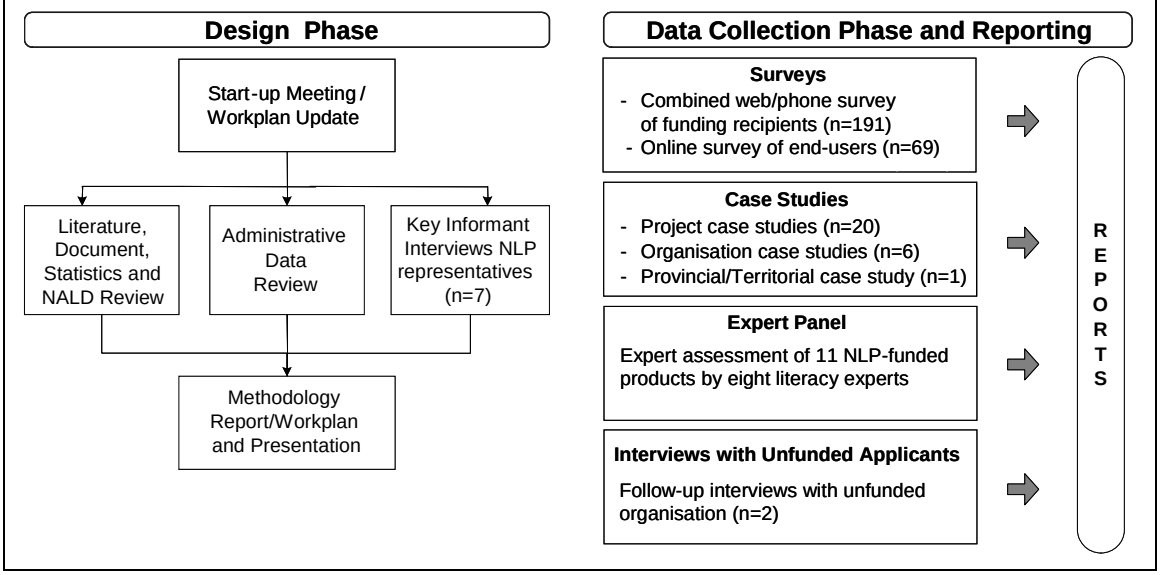
2. Methodology

This section provides an overview of the methods developed and implemented for the evaluation (scope 2002-2005), and a description of the limitations associated with the methods.

2.1 Evaluation Methods

The approach used to evaluate the National Literacy Program (NLP) is based on multiple lines of evidence. That is, more than one method was used to measure each of the evaluation indicators, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings. The following picture illustrates the various qualitative and quantitative methods used.

Figure 1
Evaluation Methods



Furthermore, an iterative approach was taken to integrate the methodologies so that each data collection activity would build upon the others. For instance, project case study participants were selected from project survey respondents so as to use their survey responses regarding availability of end-user[9] contact information as a case selection criterion. This was to enable the use of case study interviews to obtain end-user contact information for the survey of end-users, and the use of end-user survey results to validate case study results. Similarly, the NLP-funded products examined by the expert panel were selected from the project case studies, this approach offering the possibility of providing experts with the summary case study reports containing background information on the products. A brief overview of each method used is provided below.

[9] For the purpose of this evaluation, end-users were defined as the immediate intended beneficiaries of the NLP-funded activities.

2.1.1 Administrative data review

GMAX is a proprietary software package acquired by NLP to assist in the management of its grants and contributions data. Program data extracted from the GMAX database for the fiscal years 1997/98 to 2004-2005 were analysed to examine changes in the types of projects or investments made by NLP over the years, including changes in the number of projects funded, the level of funding, the target groups and issue areas funded, and the use of contributions versus grants. The GMAX database was also examined for its potential to provide ongoing performance measurement information, including an assessment of the data quality. Finally, accessibility of NLP projects and outputs and the quality of the projects funded were assessed by examining changes over time in the number of NLP project products/reports available or accessible through the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD); the number of downloads of NLP-funded vs. non-NLP-funded products from NALD; and online quality ratings provided by users on the NLP-funded products downloaded from NALD. The original approach intended for this component of the evaluation entailed selecting a sample of 40 projects that were funded during the NLP evaluation period in order to determine if their outputs (reports and tools) were posted to NALD and, where possible, the extent to which these products were downloaded. This approach was modified to examine all products posted on and downloaded from NALD from 1991 to 2004 because this new approach offered a more comprehensive coverage than a sample of 40 projects. Results from an available study on the quality ratings of a sample of products posted on NALD[10] were also used as an additional source of data on NLP products' quality.

2.1.2 Preliminary key informant interviews with NLP representatives

A total of seven (7) preliminary key informant interviews were conducted with NLP representatives to gather information on the NLP, its target clientele, and available administrative data at the design stage of the evaluation to assist the evaluation team in refining and finalizing the evaluation methodology. The key informant interviews were also used to gather some evidence on a number of evaluation issues, focusing on relevance to government and departmental priorities and on program performance measurement. Key informants included all key (representing each funding stream and corporate functions) NLP managers.

2.1.3 Review of documents and literature

Over 70 program documents, reports and articles were reviewed to develop a profile of the program, to inform development of the data collection instruments, and to address a number of evaluation issues pertaining to the relevance, implementation and success of the program. All available and relevant documents and reports were identified in consultation with the Project Authority and Program representatives, and through a review of existing Canadian

[10] NALD. Evaluation of Educational Freeware and Shareware Software Programs as Effective Resources for Adult Literacy Training Programs. http://www.nald.ca/software/

and international literature and statistics, including the International Adult Literacy Skills Survey (IALSS) from Statistics Canada. It must be noted that no document or literature was found on comparable literacy programs in Canada or internationally. As well, no documents were found, with the exception of past evaluations of the NLS, that presented evidence of NLP impacts on literacy learners or literacy capacity building.

2.1.4 Survey of NLP funding recipients

An online survey was conducted of all organisations that received NLP funding during the fiscal years 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and/or 2004-2005. This survey was implemented within the first eight months of the evaluation. It aimed to produce a profile of funded organisations and their project end-users and to document funding recipients' perception of the relevance, implementation and success of the NLP. Being a less costly method than a phone survey, the online survey allowed evaluators to invite all NLP funding recipients for the targeted period rather than the sample of 40 initially intended.

For organisations with more than one project in a fiscal year or multiple projects across years, the largest project was selected as the reference project for the survey. In total 513 funding recipients, with a total of 1,058 projects among them, were identified using this methodology.

Since the GMAX database did not contain e-mail addresses, these were obtained from HRSDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions (CSGC) database. The CSGC is a department-wide system for recording grants and contributions information. Since this database contained e-mail addresses for a limited number of organisations, additional e-mail addresses were obtained through an Internet search. Out of the population of 513 organisations extracted for the survey, e-mail addresses were located for 402 organisations. All 402 organisations were sent an e-mail to invite them to participate in the survey. Reminder e-mails were sent to non-respondents and a follow-up telephone call was made to non-respondents to ensure the e-mails were sent to the appropriate person and to update the e-mail information if necessary. According to the respondent's preferences, five interviews were conducted by telephone during the follow-up contacts.

A total of 191[11] of the 402 funding recipients invited to participate in the survey completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 48% (37% of the entire population). The sampling error for this sample is approximately 5.6%, based on 191 respondents and a population of 513. A comparison of the administrative data for the original 513 projects and the same data for the 191 funding recipients who responded to the survey showed no large systematic response bias (less than 5 percentage points difference) in terms of the observable variables (Region, Funding Stream, and Activity Field).

[11] The n is not equal to 191 for each of the survey question. Please always refer to the number of respondents for survey results when considering the total percentage.

2.1.5 Project case studies

Case studies were conducted on twenty (20) projects funded by the NLP between 2002 and 2005 to analyze evaluation issues in regard to program's relevance, implementation and success. Case studies were selected based, among other criteria, on the survey of funding recipients. All projects for which the survey respondents said they kept an electronic list of their end-users and might be willing to share it for the purpose of a survey of end-users, were selected. This selection approach was chosen so as to maximize evaluation resources by using the case studies as a means of collecting end-user contact information. The need for this approach was dictated by the absence of a database containing contact information on NLP project end-users. Fourteen funding recipients said they kept an electronic list of their end-users and might be willing to share it for the purpose of a survey of end-users. Since the proposed methodology entailed twenty case studies, additional case-study participants were selected among project-funding recipients who had conducted an internal evaluation of their project (expecting that these evaluations would provide some evidence of end-user impacts that could be integrated in the case study). The resulting list of cases covers all five areas of activity of the NLP, all regions of the country, as well as all of the NLP's various funding streams, including national and provincial/territorial grants and contributions. Please refer to Appendix B for a list of selected cases.

For each case study, relevant project documents were reviewed and three to five interviews were conducted by phone with a combination of project representatives, project partners and project end-users (either practitioners or learners), as deemed appropriate for each individual case. A total of 26 project representatives, 20 project partners, 30 practitioner end-users, and 4 learner end-users were consulted as part of project case studies. The results of the survey of funding recipients were also used as an additional source of information on the project.

2.1.6 Organisation case studies

Six organisation case studies were conducted to address most evaluation issues as well as to examine how three different types of NLP support have impacted the organisations' ability to contribute to the achievement of NLP objectives and to determine whether or not the investment has been incremental and results sustainable, particularly at the learner level. The case studies included organisations that have received NLP funding consistently over at least three years between 2002 and 2005, either as part of one large project (2 cases) or a succession of one-year projects (2 cases), and organisations that received one-time funding for a period of 12 months or less (2 cases).

The selection of cases was based on the following criteria: 1) the organisation did not take part in a project case study (to avoid over-solicitation); 2) coverage of the NLP's five funding activity areas (this criteria could not be met due to the limited number of organisations that were funded in some of the activity areas); 3) coverage of various type of organisations (national, provincial, community based); 4) coverage of various project sizes in terms of funding; and 5) geographical distribution. The list of organisations selected for case studies is presented in Appendix C.

For each case study, relevant project documents were reviewed and six to twelve interviews were conducted with a combination of organisation representatives and practitioners and learners who benefited from the organisation's work, as deemed appropriate for each individual case. A total of 18 project representatives, 19 practitioner end-users, and 11 learner end-users were interviewed as part of organisation case studies.

2.1.7 Province/territory case study

One case study was conducted to assess the relevance, implementation and success of the NLP at the provincial/territorial level. Prince Edward Island (PEI) was selected for this case study as this relatively small jurisdiction permitted substantial coverage of the key provincial organisations involved in literacy and the NLP. Although likely not representative of other Canadian provinces due to its small size, PEI offers an example of a federal-provincial partnership, which is a key feature of the NLP delivery model. The sources used for the case study included interviews with an NLP (1 interview), PEI provincial government (2 interviews) and funded organisations' representatives (11 interviews); a review of project and provincial documents; and site visits to three projects.

2.1.8 Survey of NLP project end-users

An online survey of NLP projects end-users was conducted to assess the quality and usefulness of the materials produced as part of NLP-funded projects; how they were used and applied; as well as their overall impact on end-users. "End-users" were defined as the literacy practitioners who used the materials and/or tools produced by NLP-funded organisations. (The survey of funding recipients and project case study interviews revealed that for a great majority of NLP funded projects the immediate end-users were literacy practitioners).

Contact lists of project end-users were requested from funding recipient representatives who took part in a project case study interview. A total of seven organisations submitted a list of end-users in response to this request. Seven other organisations had initially agreed, as part of the survey of funding recipients, to submit a list of end-users but later changed their minds due to concerns about client confidentiality. The seven lists obtained contained a total of 213 end-user contacts. This list of contacts was further reduced to 177 names because 36 e-mail addresses were invalid (the e-mail message bounced back). In order to increase the potential number of end-user respondents to this survey, a request was also sent to all participants in the survey of funding recipients who said they had a contact list of their end users but were unwilling to share it, asking them to distribute the survey invitation to their end-users on behalf of the evaluation team. Three organisations distributed the survey invitation to their end-users (the total number of end-users who received the invitation is unknown). Upon survey closing, 40 questionnaires had been completed by individuals in the initial list of 177 names (22.6% response rate) and 29 were completed by individuals who had received the survey invitation from one of the three funded organisations, for a total of 69 completed questionnaires. The response rate for this second means of distribution is unknown because the survey invitation was distributed by the funded organisations to an unknown number of end-users.

2.1.9 Expert Panel

Eight literacy experts were recruited to review the quality of a sample of NLP-funded products. The purpose of the expert panel was to establish a set of criteria to be used in assessing research reports, to determine the quality of the research and materials and tools developed with the assistance of NLP funding, and to assess the extent to which the NLP is meeting the research and materials and tools development needs of the Canadian literacy community. Experts were chosen from across the literacy community to include a combination of researchers, materials developers, program administrators, and literacy trainers. Potential candidates for this panel were identified from a search of the Internet and in consultation with NLP representatives. In the interest of objectivity, efforts were made to ensure that panellists were not recent recipients of NLP funds or members of organisations in receipt of NLP funding, and that they had no involvement in developing the materials being reviewed by this expert panel.

A sample of eleven products was selected containing training tools/materials as well as research reports. The initial intended approach consisted of selecting products from projects that were reviewed as part of project case studies. The purpose of this selection approach was to take advantage of the background information collected as part of case studies on the projects from which the products were selected. However, products were identified and obtained for only five of the twenty project case studies. The remaining six products to be reviewed as part of this expert panel were selected from HRSDC's library of available products produced as part of projects funded by NLP between 2002 and 2006. This selection entailed picking every eight product among a total of forty products filed in HRSDC's library. The resulting selection yielded a reasonable number of research reports (3), thereby removing the need to conduct purposive sampling.

The experts were asked to each review two or three NLP-funded products, depending on the length of the materials to review. Each product was reviewed by two experts. They were asked to assess and provide qualitative descriptions of the material on the following dimensions: 1) overall quality of the product; 2) relevance to the goals of the project for which the product was produced; and 3) value of the product to the field of literacy. Two rounds of assessment were conducted, where experts were given a chance to review their comments based on the other expert's assessment. The list of products reviewed is included in Appendix D.

2.1.10 Phone Interviews with Unfunded Organisations

Phone interviews were conducted with representatives of organisations that were unsuccessful in obtaining NLP funding for one of their literacy projects in the fiscal years 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 (fiscal years corresponding to the scope of the evaluation and identical to those used for the survey of funding recipients). The interviews focused on the relevance of the program, the adequacy of its funding criteria, and the effectiveness of its application and review process. These interviews were also conducted to find out if these organisations went ahead with their project in spite of being refused NLP

funding and, if they went ahead, find out how the absence of NLP funding may have affected their project in terms of scope, timelines, activities, partners and impacts, among others.

Criteria used for selecting unfunded organisations were: 1) organisations that submitted an unsuccessful funding application during the three fiscal years examined; and 2) that did not receive NLP funding at all (e.g. through other funding applications) during the same period of time examined. A total of 36 proposed projects were not funded by the NLP from 2002 to 2005. These 36 projects had been submitted by a total of 30 different organisations. Of these 30 organisations, all except three (3) had received NLP funding for at least one project during the period examined and were therefore removed from the list of unfunded organisations eligible for interviews, thereby leaving three unfunded organisations to be contacted for an interview. Two of the three organisations accepted to be interviewed (they had not gone ahead with their project without NLP support); the third organisation refused due to time constraints.

This component of the evaluation was not in the initial methodology work plan. It was added at the end of the data collection process to complement existing lines of evidence with feedback from stakeholders who did not benefit from the program. This added line of evidence was suggested by peer reviewers to ensure a more balanced view of the program, given that other lines of evidence (the panel of experts excepted) involved individuals (program representatives, funding recipients, project partners and project end-users) who either have a stake in the program or have benefited from it.

2.2 Limitations

As with any evaluation study, there are a number of limitations associated with this evaluation. The reader is encouraged to take the following limitations into account when reviewing the findings from this report:

Measuring learner impacts: The NLP is one stakeholder among many who attempt to impact literacy levels at the federal, provincial and community levels. It does not fund direct delivery of literacy services to learners but, rather, plays a facilitator role and provides complementary funding to organisations. Assessing learner impacts attributable to the NLP alone is therefore inherently difficult.

Furthermore, no consensus exists within the Canadian literacy community as to appropriate measures of the impact of literacy services on the literacy levels of Canadians.[12] While the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALL) Survey (from Statistics Canada) results are generally recognized as good indicators of the need for literacy supports in Canada, these tools are not appropriate measures of the impact of the NLP on literacy levels in Canada.

[12] The NLS logic model states that its ultimate outcome is to "[c]ontribute to stronger literacy skills among Canadians who participated in NLS funded projects and initiatives."

Since the majority of NLP funding (at least three quarters) was provided through grants (which entail minimal accountability requirements), there were limited requirements for the recipients to collect and report information on their specific end-users. The resulting absence of a database of NLP project end-users limited the ability of the evaluation team to implement a survey of end-users and to measure end-user impacts.

Finally, evidence collected as part of this evaluation showed that learners make up a relatively small proportion of immediate end-users of NLP project outputs, thereby increasing the difficulty of obtaining access to learners for the purpose of measuring learner impacts. As a result, assessment of learner impacts was limited and based mostly on testimonies from funded organisations' representatives. However, this is to be expected since learners are not the immediate targets of NLP activities.

Overall impact measurement: The absence of program baseline data and specific benchmarks other than the project profile information available as part of the NLP administrative data has limited the evaluators' ability to compare current program achievements to the period preceding the period targeted by the evaluation. The resulting conclusions are therefore based on post-intervention measurement of various program stakeholders' perceptions.

Case Studies: The practitioners, project partners and learners consulted as part of project and organisation case studies were selected and recruited by the funding recipients, thereby introducing a potential bias in the testimonies received. This selection approach was chosen because, for privacy reasons, the majority of funding recipients refused to provide full contact lists of their partners and end-users, preferring to request and arrange their participation themselves. Nevertheless, the twenty project case studies document the wide range of projects benefiting from the NLP's contribution while providing lessons learned and suggestions for program improvement.

End-User (practitioners) Survey: The survey of end-users relied on the input from end-users of only seven organisations out of 513, representing only 1.4% of all organisations that received NLP funds from 2002 to 2005. Consequently, results from this end-user survey are not considered to be representative of NLP end-users. The information was therefore used for illustrative purposes and no general conclusions about the program were derived from these responses. It must however be noted that, in spite of the limited number of end-user lists identified through the survey of project funding recipients and obtained through project case studies, the selection approach adopted was valuable in that it enabled the evaluation team to identify and document the challenges and barriers faced by the NLP in collecting end-user contact information for the purpose of an end-user survey. Given that the survey of funding recipients invitation was sent to all organisations funded by the NLP within the period targeted by the evaluation, and that all organisations who reported having a contact list of their project end-users were invited to participate in project case studies and to submit their list of end-users, the evaluation team concludes that it would likely not have had more success in obtaining end-user contact information through other means (e.g. contacting funding recipients who did not answer the survey of funding recipients).

Expert Panel: The sample of eleven products reviewed by the expert panel is not representative of the wide variety of products resulting from NLP-funded projects. Consequently, general conclusions on the quality and relevance of NLP-funded products cannot be drawn from these results.

3. Key Findings

Key evaluation findings are presented under each relevant evaluation issue.

3.1 Rationale and Relevance

Evaluation Question: Are the objectives, activities, outputs and desired outcomes of the NLP consistent with departmental, public policy, literacy community, and public needs and priorities?

Departmental priorities pertaining to literacy during the time period examined are outlined in the Department's 2002-2003 Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP), which states that "[s]upport for literacy activities through the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) will continue to be a fundamental part of our approach to skills and learning. We will continue to promote literacy as a key component of a learning society and to make Canada's social, economic and community life more accessible to people with limited literacy skills." Furthermore, with its strategic priority, "Through access to learning, Canadians can participate fully in a knowledge-based economy and society", formulated in its 2004-2005 RPP, the Department vowed to "[p]ursue policy and program development on lifelong learning, focusing on the reduction of financial and non-financial barriers to learning." Low literacy skills were identified as one such barrier. Literacy was also identified as one of six priority areas for labour market collaboration with provinces. The National Literacy Program (NLP) is consistent with these Departmental priorities given that it works in partnership with the provinces, territories, non-governmental organisations and business and labour organisations "to promote literacy as an essential component of a learning society and to make Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills."[13]

Key informants from NLP also considered that the NLP expected outcome of improved access to literacy skills by Canadians with low literacy skills is aligned with Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC's) mandate, "to improve the standard of living and quality of life of all Canadians by promoting a highly skilled and mobile labour force and an efficient and inclusive labour market,"[14] given the link established between literacy skills and an individuals' access to the labour market and social, economic and political life in our new knowledge-based economy.

> "The NLP's goal is to promote economic vitality, productivity, and competitiveness through higher literacy skills. Literacy is like Velcro to which other skills attach." *(Key Informant from NLP).*

The implementation of a federal partnership literacy funding program such as the NLP also appears to be consistent with the Government of Canada's public policy priorities for the time period examined. In the 2002 Speech from the Throne, the Canadian government vowed to "build on its investments in research, literacy and education, and in competitive

[13] http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top_nav/program/nls.shtml
[14] Evaluation Terms of Reference. March 2005.

cities and healthy communities."[15] More specifically, in its response to "Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need For A Pan-Canadian Response", the report submitted in 2003 by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the Government of Canada stated that it viewed "literacy issues as having priority in the context of an innovation and learning culture" and that "all partners need to work together as part of a concerted effort to address literacy issues in Canada." The response clearly identifies the National Literacy Secretariat as one of the mechanisms through which the Canadian government is playing an active role in supporting various literacy initiatives and the development of partnerships.[16]

By contributing to "stronger literacy skills among Canadians", the NLP also addresses public needs related to Canadians' ability to participate in the new knowledge economy. The federal government's *Knowledge Matters* innovation paper published in 2002 underscored the need for Canada to strengthen the skills and learning of its people and, "to provide the opportunity for all to contribute to and benefit from the new economy."[17] Among the goals outlined in this paper, the following figured strongly: increased job security; more effective job performance; and increased ability of adults to adapt to change and participate fully in Canada's society and economy.

Results from the survey of funding recipients also confirm the relevance of the program: 77% (out of 191) of funding recipient respondents rated (on a four point scale where 1 was not at all consistent, 2 was not very consistent, 3 was somewhat consistent and 4 was very consistent) the NLP as somewhat or very consistent with literacy needs and priorities. When asked what needs and priorities of the literacy community the NLP should help address, the needs most frequently mentioned by survey respondents were for longer-term or core funding (41 mentions), NLS coordination and networking (29 mentions), awareness and promotion activities (23 mentions), more support for research projects (18 mentions), funding for direct learner service delivery (18 mentions), and funding for training or accreditation of practitioners (15 mentions).

Key informants consulted as part of one case study recognized the essential role played by the NLP due to its leadership, its unique ability to address literacy capacity gaps, and its support for innovative concepts such as informal learning, that are not supported by other funding organisations.

On the one hand, long-term funding, funding for core programming (as opposed to projects) and funding for direct learner service delivery being excluded from eligible NLP-funded activities, the program appears to fall short of these key areas of need identified by survey respondents. The survey open-ended responses also revealed some gaps with respect to awareness building both with respect to potential participants and the Canadian public. Survey respondents referred to the need for funding of awareness and promotion activities to publicize programs and services to recruit participants and the

[15] Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the 37th Parliament of Canada, September 30, 2002. http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=sftddt&Doc=sftddt2002_e.htm

[16] Government of Canada. Response to: "Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need For A Pan-Canadian Response" The Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. 2003.

[17] HRSDC, 2002.

need for direct awareness building activities to build public support to help reduce the stigma associated with low literacy, which prevents many individuals from seeking assistance. Organisation case studies also highlighted the need to disseminate research findings more widely and in a way that is more accessible and useful to practitioners. According to some organisation representatives, much of the current research tends to be written up in a very academic format that is not easily accessible to most.

> "It is important to avoid jargon, to use clear language, to get the research into the hands of practitioners and learners on the ground, and to develop practical tools and resources in response to research findings". (*Organisation Representative*).

Key informants from NLP also reported that the need for stable funding continues to be of concern for literacy organisations, as confirmed by survey of funding recipients' responses and interviews with unfunded organisations. In an attempt to address this need without changing its eligibility criteria that precludes funding of core programming and long-term (ongoing) funding, the NLP made the strategic decision in 2003 to fund fewer but larger multi-year (2-3 years) projects. Evidence of this shift is apparent from the review of the program administrative data, which shows that in the three years covered by the evaluation the average number of funded projects decreased by 50% while the average value of the projects doubled. It must also be noted that only three of the 513 organisations that submitted one or more applications to the NLP between 2002 and 2005 did not receive any funding. This finding suggests that while the number of funded projects has decreased, the NLP continued supporting almost all the organisations that applied for funding. Consistent with the other needs identified by survey respondents, the program has funded activities in the areas of coordination and networking ($12,143,017 in 2004-2005 or 43% of total project funding), awareness and promotion ($3,067,354 in 2004-2005 or 11% of total project funding), and research ($4,771,462 in 2004-2005 or 17% of total project funding).

The Canadian Automotive Repair & Service (CARS) Council's Basic Snowmobile Maintenance for First Nations project addressed several specific needs: lack of training infrastructure in remote communities, barriers of time and distance to training, and an urgent need for practical learner-based training. Several sources consulted for this evaluation highlighted the relevance of this type of project given that lack of essential skills is a barrier to the acquisition of knowledge and practical skills critical to self-sufficiency in remote communities.

Case studies also provided testimonies from funding recipients attesting to the importance of the NLP's contributions to addressing local literacy needs. Evidence from the six organisation case studies shows that NLP funding is being used for projects that are deemed highly relevant to address local and regional literacy needs, particularly for initiatives targeting specific clienteles such as families, seniors, youth and the workplace. NLP funds are seen by organisation representatives as a key enabler of capacity building activities in the field of literacy tools development and services, as well as professional development and coordination activities. There appears to be few alternative sources of funding, in the areas examined, for literacy capacity building, coordination and program development. As such, the NLP plays a unique and necessary role.

Evaluation Question: Is there a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this program area or activity? Is the program a candidate for realignment with the provinces?

This evaluation question, stemming from the Government of Canada's Expenditure Review Committee questions, is particularly relevant given the NLP's intervention in a domain of provincial jurisdiction. However, none of the literature reviewed or the NLP key informants consulted have presented arguments against the legitimacy and necessity of the NLP. The NLP's partnership role is considered by NLP and PEI representatives to be a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in the area of literacy, given the identified need to coordinate literacy activities across provincial and regional boundaries, to foster effective partnerships, and to complement and leverage provincial efforts in literacy.

Notably, the PEI case study has provided a strong example of effective and successful federal and provincial collaboration. The provincial government sees the NLP as a valued partner in the development and implementation of the PEI literacy strategy. However, provincial case study informants felt that there needs to be a strengthened federal mandate and funding for literacy development. Informants involved in workplace literacy/learning programs felt that the national approach to essential skills development is too separate from literacy.

Representatives of an NLP-funded organisation in the field of workplace literacy felt that NLP support "is extremely important, as few alternative sources of funding exist for this kind of work." According to them, workplace educators have repeatedly emphasized the value in having an opportunity to come together for face-to-face networking and professional development. Organisation representatives found the NLP "a unique and well-suited source of support for this type of activity."

> "There needs to be stronger recognition of the link between literacy and essential skills, and a one-stop approach to funding of programs." (*Provincial Case Study Key Informant*).

Several funded organisations and literacy stakeholders consulted as part of organisation case studies also emphasized the importance of the role played by the NLP as a champion of new approaches and initiatives at the national level and as a source of funding where provincial funds are minimal.

According to representatives of an NLP-funded organisation, the NLP plays a relevant and important role because few alternative sources of funding exist to address literacy needs in their province. This is particularly true for family literacy programming. The NLP funding is considered to be crucial in advancing literacy efforts in their province.

According to key informants from the NLP, before the NLP's creation, in several provinces the literacy community was not well coordinated, had an underdeveloped voice, and conducted limited advocacy efforts. Since the NLP's inception, a literacy strategy has been developed in every province and territory, and members of the literacy community have learned to work with federal and provincial governments.

3.2 Implementation

Evaluation Question: Program Utilization and Reach – To what extent do NLP interventions reach targeted stakeholders and learners?

The NLS has listed the following targets for the primary reach of its actions:[18]

- Provinces and territories;
- Field-level literacy organisations delivering programs to individuals;
- Non-governmental groups whose primary focus may not be literacy;[19]
- Provincial and national literacy organisations;
- International organisations;
- Other federal government departments and agencies;
- Universities;
- Researchers; and
- The media.[20]

The program's administrative database does not contain coded information on the types of organisations receiving NLP funding, thereby preventing a comparison of actual funded organisations to the target categories enumerated above. One general category of profile information is however captured in the administrative database, distinguishing between literacy, non-literacy and private sector organisations. For the years 2002 to 2005 targeted by this evaluation, 292 funding recipient organisations were coded as literacy organisations, 211 were non-literacy organisations, and 10 were private sector organisations.

The program's administrative database also records the end-user groups targeted by individual projects at the time of funding application but not the profile or number of individuals actually reached. In the absence of precise data on end-users, no definite conclusions can therefore be made on the program's actual reach.

Nevertheless, some indications of the NLP's reach could be gathered through the survey of funding recipients. First, funding recipients surveyed were asked to provide some details on the profile of their organisation. They were typically well-established local literacy or non-profit organisations, with small staff and limited annual budgets. Key characteristics of the 191 respondents included:

[18] The Governance Network (2005). National Literacy Secretariat Draft Interim and Summative Evaluation Strategy. February 2005.

[19] These could be, for example, organisations helping homeless Aboriginal people or organisations helping ex-offenders reintegrate into society.

[20] Presumably as disseminators of information on literacy issues in Canada.

- Type of organisation – local literacy organisations (35%) or non-profit service organisations (22%);
- Years in operation – more than 15 years (62%), 11 to 15 years (19%);
- Number of employees – 1 to 5 (39%), 6 to 10 (23%); and
- Annual budget – under 100k (22%), 100K to 499K (40%).

The profile of the funding recipients was also analyzed to determine if there were differences based on the type of funding or related project administrative data variables. The findings from this analysis included:

- Funding recipients from Quebec (25.7% or 49/191) were more likely to be local literacy organisations (62%), as were funding recipients who received funding under the Provincial/Territorial funding stream (54%);
- Local literacy organisations accounted for the majority of the projects approved under $24K (65%) and between $25K and 49K (58%);
- There was a significant decline in the percentage of local literacy organisations receiving funding in the first two years of projects covered by the survey (46% in 2002-2003 and 45% in 2003-2004) and the most recent fiscal year covered in the survey (15% in 2005-2006). During the same time period the percentage of provincial literacy organisations funded increased from 4% to 8% to 36%; and
- The percentage of organisations with operating budgets under $100K declined from 28% in 2002-2003 to 9% in 2005-2006.

Second, funding recipients surveyed were asked to describe the target groups for their NLP-funded products[21] and the estimated number of end-users of these funded products. It should be noted that this information is based solely on funding recipients' estimates of the intended targets; the relative percentage of the actual end-users of the products could be different.

According to funding recipients surveyed, the primary users or target beneficiaries for their principal NLP project outputs were local literacy organisations, learners, other NGOs, provincial literacy organisations, and families. However, the projects were often designed for multiple target groups.

[21] For the purpose of this report, products include materials, tools, research or services produced as part of projects that received NLP funding.

Table 1 Type of End-Users for NLP-Funded Projects (Survey of Funding Recipients)	
Primary users or target beneficiaries for the principal project outputs	**Percent of Respondents**
Local literacy organisation	65.3%
Learners	64.2%
Other non-profit service organisation	47.7%
Provincial literacy organisation	43.2%
Families	42.6%
National literacy organisation	24.4%
University/College/CEGEP	20.5%
Other non-profit research/advocacy organisation	17.6%
Provincial government	17.6%
Employers	17.0%
Union/Labour organisation	13.1%
Local government	3.4%
Other	19.3%
Number of respondents	**176**

Approximately two thirds (64% out of 191) of the survey respondents were able to provide information on the number of end-users reached by their primary project product. As shown in Table 2, a majority of surveyed funding recipients (53% out of 122) who were able to answer this question reported that their primary project product was used by 16 to 50 or 51 to 125 end-users.

Table 2 Number of Primary Product End-Users (Survey of Funding Recipients)	
Number of persons who requested or used the primary project product	**Percent of Respondents**
1–15	5.4%
16–50	21.7%
51–125	31.5%
126–500	17.4%
More than 500	23.9%
Total	100.0%
Number of respondents	**122**

In PEI, case study results show that Literacy/Adult Basic Education programming enrolment has increased from zero to 1,200 annually since the development of the NLP-supported 1996 provincial literacy strategy. Key informants indicated that all major provincial and community-based organisations in the province are reached by NLP funding and the provincial strategy.

Lastly, in four of the six organisation case studies, the project delivered training to several trainers who in turn used the new skills acquired to assist literacy learners. The end-users thus reached are very diverse, including literacy practitioners, youth, families, and seniors from various Canadian provinces.

In conclusion, although the data collected does not allow definitive conclusions to be drawn on the reach of NLP-funded projects, there is some indications that the funded activities are targeting and reaching a wide range of stakeholders particularly literacy organisations, non-profit service organisations and, indirectly through funded project outputs, literacy practitioners and learners, including youth, families, and seniors from various Canadian provinces. The program has taken a responsive approach to addressing local literacy needs and, as such, did not set specific targets for the reach of its activities. Furthermore, no data is being collected by the program on the actual end-users of NLP-funded activities, thereby preventing an accurate assessment of its reach.

Target categories of stakeholders whose reach could not be assessed as part of this evaluation include international organisations, other federal government departments and agencies, and the media. These categories of potential end-users were not included as response options in the survey of funding recipients because they appeared from the review of program documents and key informant interviews with NLP representatives to be secondary (as opposed to primary) end-users of the NLP. These categories of stakeholders appear to be more immediate targets of the work of the NLS than of the NLP, which is only one component of the NLS's activities.

Evaluation Question: Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness – Are eligibility criteria clear and well understood?

NLP eligibility criteria are listed in the program application package and on the NLP Website. Eligible organisations include:

- Non-profit organisations operating at the national, provincial, regional, community or neighbourhood level;
- Non-governmental institutions such as teachers' federations, labour unions, trade associations and professional associations;
- Canadian post-secondary institutions such as universities, colleges and vocational and technical institutes;
- Provinces and territories; and
- Provincial/Territorial institutions, including provincial Crown corporations.

Eligible types of projects are those that fall under the program's five categories of activities: Learning Materials, Access and Outreach, Coordination and Information, Public Awareness, and Research. The NLP **does not** provide project funding for the following:

- Provision of direct, ongoing literacy services;
- Activities that have already taken place;
- Ongoing activities;
- Projects which need 100% funding;
- Capital costs;
- Travel outside Canada; and
- Debts or financial losses that result from a project.[22]

In addition, the NLP requires that applicants secure additional funding for their project from other sources than the NLP.

According to key informants from NLP, program eligibility criteria are generally well understood by project funding applicants and when potential applicants have doubts regarding eligibility criteria, they can access the NLP website and have easy phone access to program officers.

A majority of funding recipients consulted as part of the survey and case studies also reported that they considered the eligibility criteria as clear. Eighty-three percent (out of 191) of funding recipient survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the clarity of the eligibility criteria. This is the highest satisfaction rating reported by funding recipients of all the satisfaction questions asked in the survey.

However, even though 70% (out of 191) of the funding recipients report being satisfied or very satisfied with the simplicity of the funding application process, 14% remain dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Evaluation Question: Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness – Is the current approach to determining priorities and distributing funding the most efficient and effective way for NLP to achieve its objectives?

Approach to determining funding priorities

Within the five categories of eligible NLP activities (Learning Materials; Access and Outreach; Coordination and Information; Awareness Raising; and Research), specific NLP funding priorities for the provincial/territorial stream are established annually by each province in discussion with NLP managers and based on provincial-specific needs and priorities. National funding stream priorities are established by NLP managers, in consultation with stakeholders. According to the NLP managers, in recent years

[22] National Literacy Secretariat. Grant Funding Application Package.

national stream funding priorities have focussed on workplace literacy and family literacy, emerging areas deemed important by the program.

The process for distributing federal/provincial stream funding is considered by NLP representatives consulted to be the best approach given the absence of federal jurisdiction in areas pertaining to education. They all consider that this collaborative approach to priority setting is an effective way to leverage provincial/territorial commitments to literacy. Furthermore, the flexibility allowed by the national stream funding allocation mechanism is seen by NLP representatives as a key feature enabling the program to support the NLS's national leadership role in the field of literacy.

A majority of participants (funding recipients) in the organisation case studies reported not being aware of the way NLP priorities are determined and funding distributed. In the same way, only 57% (out of 191) of funding recipient survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the transparency of the proposal review process and 54% with the timeliness of the funding approval process.

Linkage of funding decisions with immediate outcomes

As shown in Table 3, the NLP's administrative database reveals that projects funded during the period 2002-2005 targeted each of the first five intended immediate outcomes of the NLP. While the NLP administrative database does not include strategic partnerships as a specific activity category, key informants from NLP and anecdotal evidence collected as part of project and organisational case studies indicate that, in all cases, strategic partnerships were created for leveraging additional support to NLP-funded projects. It must be noted that this was also a program funding requirement.

Table 3
Value of Approved Projects by Activity Code and Fiscal Year

Activity Code	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Coordination & Information	33.2%	37.3%	43.2%
Learning Materials	26.9%	18.0%	17.9%
Public Awareness	15.5%	15.2%	10.9%
Access & Outreach	13.5%	20.6%	11.0%
Research	10.9%	8.9%	17.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Linkage of funding decisions with target groups

As discussed above under Program Utilization and Reach, no program administrative data was collected on the target groups or on the target end-users actually reached by the funded projects. Furthermore, the NLP has taken a responsive approach to establishing federal-provincial stream funding priorities at the provincial level; no evidence was found that the program has oriented its funding decisions towards specific target groups.

Stakeholders are the provincial governments involved in the joint (with NLP) establishment of funding allocation priorities and joint selection of winning applications for their province. The only parameters imposed by NLP were that projects had to fit within the five areas of activity and the fact that no funding would be given for core operations or ongoing activities.

NLS ability to deliver the NLP within budget and meet accountability requirements

The financial information obtained from the program indicates that the NLP is being delivered within budget, that is, the program has not exceeded the budget allocated for its implementation. The NLP's ability to meet TBS and HRSDC accountability requirements is discussed in the following section on performance measurement.

Evaluation Question: Performance Measurement – Are performance measurement systems and monitoring strategies adequate to support the NLP in achieving its objectives?

Performance Reporting Requirements

Performance reporting requirements for NLP grants and contributions are largely limited to final reports (except in the case of interim reports for larger projects funded for more than one year). In their proposals, applicants are asked to provide detailed evaluation methods for determining the success of their proposed projects. Evidence was found of some performance data being collected by funded organisations, mostly in the form of participation/attendance statistics and satisfaction/learning assessment feedback questionnaires administered at the end of training, workshops and conferences. Most completed projects examined as part of case studies and 74% (out of 191) of surveyed funding recipients have also implemented an end-of-project evaluation that included some form of consultation of their end-users on the outcomes of the project. These results are reported in the projects' final reports. However, the information contained in these final reports is not rolled-up or used by the NLP for purposes other than approving final project payment (where applicable) and closing the project file.

According to NLP managers, funding recipients generally understand and comply with the reporting requirements. In turn, funding recipients consulted as part of case studies generally reported being comfortable with project performance reporting requirements. However, a majority reported that they had difficulties monitoring and tracking end-users, particularly learners, because they cannot impose rigid rules requiring that learners report on results of the funded interventions without potentially impacting the fragile trust relationship created with this particularly vulnerable clientele.

Effectiveness of Management Systems for Grants and Contributions

According to key informants from NLP, three processes are in place to ensure achievement of program objectives and quality assurance of outputs. First, diligent project development, assessment, and selection processes at the front-end of each agreement are used by NLP officers to provide assurance on the quality of the initiative and demonstrate if the applicant has the capacity to implement and complete the project as proposed. Second, NLP officers conduct informal monitoring exercises through ongoing client liaison. Third, funded projects

are required to submit reports on the progress and achievement of their planned activities. The above key informant testimonies are consistent with documented descriptions of NLP management activities and findings from project and organisation case studies.

Financial reporting requirements, however, are more stringent for contributions (e.g. they require monthly accounting of expenses). One funding recipient reported that these additional requirements exceed their capacity because they do not have a professional accountant on staff. Program representatives also expressed concerns that many of the funded organisations the NLP funds might have limited capacity to meet contribution reporting requirements. They also argued that the type of contribution agreements used for the NLP is an inadequate response to the need to increase project accountability because it is limited to financial reporting as opposed to reporting on results.

Appropriateness of Performance Indicators and Targets and Application of Performance Information to Improve Internal Systems

An adequate performance measurement system should generally comprise the following: 1) clearly defined indicators of the program's performance (achievement of objectives and intended results) with identified sources of information on these indicators; 2) clearly identified responsibilities for collecting performance information; 3) standardized tools for collecting the performance information; 4) a systematic process for collecting and collating the performance information; and 5) an information management system or database to collect and store the performance information.

Results from the document review and key informant interviews indicate that the NLP does not have an adequate performance measurement system in place. This conclusion is based on the following observations: 1) no performance indicators or targets were officially approved by the Program against which the actual performance of the NLP could have been assessed; and 2) the Program does not have a system in place to record and store performance information, a necessary condition for NLP managers being able to use it for decision-making or reporting purposes. It must however be noted that initial attempts were made by the NLP to develop performance measures (draft measures are contained in the draft NLS Interim and Summative Evaluation Strategy dated February 2005) and to test performance data collection tools with a sample of funded organisations. The decision not to follow-up on these initial attempts was attributed in part to Senior Management's desire to focus on the new ALLESP, for which a performance measurement system is being developed.

Evaluation Question: Performance Measurement – Is performance information being used for decision-making purposes on an ongoing basis?

The information collected through NLP project reports and monitoring visits is not integrated into any kind of formal analysis or report on the overall performance of the NLP. There is no evidence of ongoing use of performance information for decision-making the organisation.

3.3 Success

Evaluation Question: Achievement of NLP Objectives – Has the NLP made progress toward achieving its objectives in each of its targeted activity areas?

The NLP's objectives correspond to the following expected outputs and outcomes for each of its priority activity areas:

- **Learning Materials:** The production of literacy information materials and tools (output) and Increased availability of adult literacy materials and tools by learners and practitioners (immediate outcome);
- **Access and Outreach:** The development of literacy access and outreach measures and project initiatives (output) and Improved access to literacy skills by Canadians with low literacy skills (immediate outcome);
- **Coordination and Information:** The production of literacy information materials and tools (outputs) and Improved dissemination and sharing of information among literacy stakeholders (immediate outcome);
- **Public Awareness:** Public awareness activities on literacy (output) and Greater awareness of literacy programs, services and issues among targeted sectors (immediate outcome);
- **Research:** The development of applied research in adult literacy (output) and Enhanced literacy research in identified priority areas (immediate outcome); and
- **Partnerships:** The development of partnerships, projects and initiatives (output) and Improved strategic partnerships involved in literacy issues (immediate outcome).

Intended indicators for measuring achievement of the above objectives included the project outputs produced; the quality, usefulness, and utilization of tools and materials; accessibility and dissemination of tools and materials; best practices being exhibited in the field; public awareness and learner participation; creation of partnerships and leveraging of additional funding and support.

Project Outputs

The NLP database does not contain information on the profile or number of actual project outputs. Key project outputs most frequently mentioned by respondents to the survey of funding recipients are literacy tools and materials (mentioned by 63% of respondents out of 81), partnerships with other organisations (mentioned by 62% of respondents), and awareness raising and promotional events and products (mentioned by 60% of respondents).

Quality, Usefulness, and Utilization of Tools and Materials

The tools and materials produced in the context of the projects outlined in the case studies were typically described by practitioner end-users as highly useful, well researched, culturally relevant, and of exemplary quality.

> "These are simple, not flashy materials that facilitate communication between two adults, supporting each other in making the child successful in kindergarten." *(Practitioner end-user).*

Expert panellists provided positive assessments of the quality and usefulness of a majority of the eleven products reviewed (these products included eight tools - training manuals, a simple language document, handout materials, an assessment tool, bulletins, and a website - and three research reports). All but two tools were deemed high quality by both reviewers, while the three research reports obtained mixed reviews. The qualities attributed to the products included, among others, good format/presentation and high potential usefulness to the literacy community. Key criticisms pertained to the lack of methodological rigour in the development and content of the products. This criticism applied to two tools and all three research reports, although negative assessments of the research reports were not unanimous among expert reviewers.

Praise was expressed by practitioners for the quality and utility of the materials and workshops developed through one of the NLP-funded projects. Practitioners remarked that the resources were culturally appropriate and effective in meeting the needs of learners. The materials were deemed particularly helpful to practitioners in communicating with learners of all age ranges.

The 2002 evaluation had identified limitations in the reliability and credibility of local research. An NLS-commissioned research reviewing NLP-funded research reports from 1998 to 2003 concluded that the NLS had contributed substantially to literacy education in Canada through its research function but that improvements could still be made, among others, in detailing the research methodology and drawing linkages to other research work. Similar concerns were expressed by some experts with regards to a sample of research reports examined. No evidence was found that the NLP's approach to funding research projects was modified following this study or to address the 2002 evaluation recommendations.

Also, 75% (out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed indicated that NLP had contributed somewhat or a lot to improving the quality of literacy research, materials and/or tools. Sixty-four percent (out of 191) said that the NLP contributed somewhat or a lot to improved literacy programming.

Furthermore, a review of NLP funded products posted on NALD demonstrated general appreciation for the quality of the products. NALD is one of the key partners in the NLP's approach to disseminating the results of its funded projects. Quality ratings of NALD products were provided by literacy coordinators and instructors of the Community Academic Services Program (CASP) in New Brunswick as part of NALD's Software Evaluation Project. The ratings were based on a 5-point scale (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest quality rating). In total, there were 136 products published by NALD between 1990 and 2004 with these ratings, 44 being NLP-funded. None of the NLP products received a rating below three; 43% had a rating of four out of five and 18% had a rating of five. The average rating for the NLP products was 3.8; however, there was no statistically significant difference in the ratings of NLP and non-NLP-funded products.

Practitioners consulted on one NLP-funded project considered the regional workshops it held to be positive and highly productive. In these workshops, they were introduced to a new model for integrating literacy in their practice and they forged new partnerships which led to relevant and practical action plans.

End-user survey results show that users of the NLP-funded products (respondents to the end-user survey) include, among others, the following categories of individuals:

- Literacy program/services administrators;
- Literacy trainers/teachers/facilitators;
- Researchers;
- Distributors/hosts of literacy materials/curricula/programs/information;
- Developers/testers of literacy training and education tools and materials;
- Policy makers or advisors;
- Literacy volunteers;
- Employment/training/career/human resources counsellors;
- Fundraisers and lobbyists; and
- Students currently studying/training to become literacy practitioners.

A majority (77% out of 69) of end-users consulted reported that they were still using or accessing the NLP funded products and services. End-users were also queried on how NLP funded products and services were applied in their literacy-related work. Sixty (60) respondents provided multiple open-ended answers that were sorted into the following four main categories:

- Used to improve or support their current literacy training or policy practice (32);
- Used to develop new literacy programs or training tools (17);
- Used to create or strengthen partnerships (9);
- Used to conduct awareness raising activities (7);
- Distributed the products/disseminated the new knowledge among their network of end-users (6); and
- Used the information to develop stronger funding applications (2).

In summary, the above results from end-user, funding recipient surveys, expert panel and case studies indicate that most project outputs are perceived as being adequate and useful by practitioners and stakeholders.

Accessibility and Dissemination of Tools and Materials

The following evidence indicates that NLP funds have contributed somewhat to partners and stakeholders sharing and/or receiving literacy information and to literacy materials and tools being developed and made available to learners and stakeholders. As outlined in its management response to the 2002 Summative Evaluation recommendation to increase accessibility of projects and results, the program implemented a number of measures:

- It began using HRSDC's CSGC, expecting that "this new data tracking system capacities" would enable the capture of project results appropriate for dissemination;
- It implemented a mechanism whereby a copy of all NLP-funded products is to be deposited at HRSDC's library, which is accessible to the public and whose catalogue is available on-line via the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD);
- It required that all NLS-funded project descriptions be posted on the NALD web-site;
- It explored the feasibility of putting all products/materials on NALD as full text documents (full text versions of materials were put on NALD in full text on an ad hoc basis);
- It supported the literacy database at the University of Alberta;
- It funded a number of newsletters such as Connect and Literacy.ca and supported a new literacy research journal to publicize materials and resources developed; and
- It supported conferences as a vehicle for sharing information, such as the National Best Practices Workshop on Literacy.

In addition, the NLP requests that program applicants specify in their project funding application how they intend to distribute or make available reports or other products resulting from their project.

Some of the above-listed intended changes were however not fully implemented.

First, while the number of NLP-funded products (reports and tools) posted on NALD has increased, there are indications that some may still be missing (although the total number of NLP-funded products, and therefore the number of products missing on NALD, is not recorded by the program). For example, a search of the NALD database resulted in only three reports from Prince Edward Island projects, and no reports from the projects reviewed for the PEI provincial case study. An analysis of NALD data was conducted to examine changes over time in the availability of NLP-funded products on the NALD website and the number of times the products were accessed by users. There were 502 NLP-funded products and 1,047 non-NLP-funded products on NALD with publication dates 1990 to 2004. Data shows that the number of NLP-funded products on NALD rose gradually since 1990. Prior to 1996, there were fewer than 10 NLP-funded products in each year. From 2001 to 2004, the number of NLP-funded products on NALD ranged between 22 and 87. NLP-funded products were also more likely to be downloaded than non NLP-funded products: for products published in 2003 and 2004 and posted on NALD, 80% of the 109

NLP-funded documents were downloaded at least once during the period 2003-2005 compared to 56% of the 234 non-NLP-funded documents.

Second, although the CSGC was adopted for managing NLP project information, the system has yet to be used for information dissemination purposes. The NLP does not have a mechanism for documenting and sharing lessons learned from the various projects it funds. Final project reports are filed, with no systematic process for informing other similar organisations of the lessons learned and good practices developed or tested as part of these projects. According to key informants from NLP, this sharing occurs on an ad hoc basis and is dependent on the NLP officers/managers' level of familiarity with a particular file or organisation.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, 79% (out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed consider that the NLP have contributed a lot or somewhat to information dissemination and case study evidence shows that at the project level some amount of dissemination occurs.

Seventy-three percent (out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed reported that NLP contributed somewhat or a lot to improved access to literacy research, materials and/or tools. The most frequently mentioned methods of NLP project results dissemination by funding recipients were: presentations at workshops and seminars (56% out of 167), mail/e-mail (49% out of 167), posted on websites (40% out of 167), and published (40% out of 167).

Organisation case studies illustrated that improved access to literacy services and outreach to potential beneficiaries was promoted through the establishment of linkages with other organisations that ensure mutual referrals to their respective programs. Organisations also sit on each other's Boards of Administration or project advisory committees. Existing programs were expanded to additional sites across the country enhancing dissemination of information. Train the trainers sessions also ensured wider capacity to deliver services. Examples of improved access and outreach from organisation case studies include the following:

- *The Winnipeg Foundation:* Some programs, targeted at new immigrants, have been adjusted to begin after Ramadan, in order to increase participation rates.
- *The Further Education Society of Alberta:* As part of NLP-funded projects, the organisation held the first train-the-trainers program in francophone family literacy in the country; 63 trainers and 15 practitioners from across the country received training.
- *Shilo Military Resources Centre:* The foundational family training course funded by the NLP includes a recruitment module, which guides practitioners in promoting and stimulating community interest and participation in family literacy programs.

Best Practices

A few examples were found as part of this evaluation of best practices[23] being exhibited in the literacy field.

[23] A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. Source: http://searchvb.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid8_gci498678,00.html

Several projects examined as part of case studies focused on adapting successful existing approaches to particular regional realities (e.g. development of Workplace Training materials in French by Le Collège du savoir), making them more accessible to practitioners in remote areas (e.g. Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council's training in snowmobile repair and maintenance delivered through local trainers, mentors and coaches), or expanding capacity to deliver successful programs across the country (e.g. development of eight new *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters – HIPPY* sites across Canada).

> *Tough Challenges: Great Rewards,* the NLP-supported literacy strategy in PEI, was cited by several informants as the best example of a best practice in PEI. An inclusive approach and the avoidance of silos in developing and implementing projects were cited as key components of this successful strategy.

Also, 71% (out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed reported that the NLP had contributed somewhat or a lot to sharing of best practices. Respondents who had been funded under the national projects stream were more likely to rate the NLP as contributing a lot to the sharing of best practices (67% out of 54) than respondents funded under the provincial/territorial projects stream (36% out of 114).

Public Awareness and Learner Participation

While an increase in program participation could not be measured in the absence of baseline and project performance data, some evidence was collected illustrating the NLP's contribution to awareness raising.

Seventy-four percent (74% out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed indicated that the NLP had contributed somewhat or a lot to greater awareness of literacy programs and services among end-users. Awareness raising/promotional event was one of the three most frequently mentioned (by 60% out of 181) results of NLP-funded projects by funding recipients survey respondents.

> The Winnipeg Foundation inserted profiles of its NLP funded program *Literacy for Life* in its magazine Working Together, held a television campaign that included a spot for Literacy for Life, promoted the program at a popular golf tournament, and placed an add in the Winnipeg Free Press every second Saturday.

Organisation case studies showed that public awareness is promoted through organisations' promotion materials and websites, promotion campaigns, and word of mouth.

However, a review of the NLP's administrative database showed that funding for public awareness projects has decreased over time. The total value of the public awareness projects during the 1997/98 to 2001-2002 fiscal years was between $6.5 million and $7.6 million compared to $3.1 million to $5.8 million from 2002-2003 to 2004-2005. The $3.1 million approved in 2004-2005 represented 10% of the funding approved compared to approximately 25% over the first five fiscal years.

Creation of Partnerships and Leveraging of Additional Funding and Support

The development of strategic partnerships was a common feature of all organisations examined as part of organisation and project case studies, each having developed as part of their NLP-funded projects at least one partnership with other organisations either for leveraging of additional in-kind or financial resources for the project, to expand delivery sites, or to benefit from the partner's areas of expertise (e.g. business, industry, labour).

Seventy percent (out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed said the NLP had contributed somewhat or a lot to the creation of effective strategic partnerships. A high percentage (89% out of 99) reported that some or all of the partnerships created as part of their NLP-funded project continued after the project ended. Several provincial case study informants stressed how important the NLP contribution had been as a catalyst for other funders to come on board in the early days of the PEI literacy strategy implementation, and since then as the strategy has evolved. Several examples were cited of initiatives in PEI that were started with NLP funding and sustained through other funding sources. These included a summer tutoring program, Story Sacks, and specific programming within Workplace Education PEI.

NLP funding helped *Operation Go Home* strengthen its relationship with the David Smith and McHugh Centres. Through these partnerships, OGH strengthened its partnership with the Ottawa Catholic School Board, which agreed to provide a teacher on a full-time basis and expand the support provided to street-involved youth to earn either their high school diploma or high school equivalency program.

Evaluation Question: Initial learner impacts – Does the NLP contribute to the achievement of stronger literacy skills or other impacts among learners?

Several organisation representatives and practitioners consulted as part of project and organisation case studies have reported positive impacts on learners, in particular families, members of Aboriginal communities, and members of Francophone minority language communities. These impacts were, in most cases, measured on an ad hoc basis by the funded organisation or by the literacy practitioners who benefited from the NLP-funded project and in turn assisted learners. Learner impacts were reported for fourteen of the twenty projects examined as part of project case studies. While not every project examined entailed impacts on learners, some examples recorded include improvement of studying and literacy skills among youth and increased motivation to return to school, which led to completion of high school or school credits for several. Some parents went on to complete high school as a result of family literacy activities. Immigrants improved their ability to function effectively in every day situations and were prompted to seek further education. Seniors developed their ability to speak in groups, to use the Internet, and to write stories. A common thread across these examples is the increased confidence in learning and self-esteem gained by learners as part of their literacy activities.

The majority of funding recipients (62% out of 191) perceived that the NLP had contributed a lot or somewhat to improve literacy skills of learners and to their increased access to community life.

When asked what they thought was the most important difference the NLP funded products or services they used had made for learners, 51 respondents to the survey of end-users (practitioners) provided a range of open-ended answers. The most frequently mentioned were: improved access to appropriate learning materials and services (19 mentions); increased self-esteem and self-confidence regarding literacy learning and general participation in community life (10 mentions); improved knowledge or awareness of their literacy needs and of the available literacy resources and services to help them address these needs (9 mentions); and improved literacy skills and other transferable skills (8 mentions). Several (12), however, felt that the NLP funded outputs didn't have observable impacts on learners.

In summary, in the absence of program data collection on learner impacts, there is some case study related anecdotal evidence, but no broad-based evidence of program impacts on learners.

Evaluation Question: Initial capacity building – Does the NLP contribute to increased capacity among stakeholders?

For the purpose of this evaluation, capacity was defined at two levels. At the organisational level, it was defined in terms of funding recipient organisations' capacity to leverage additional support for project activities, and to increase the knowledge, experience, or expertise of their staff/ volunteers, as well as additional human resources, new procedures/protocols, etc. At the individual level, it was defined as the knowledge and skill development of literacy practitioners and other individuals involved in literacy service development, administration or delivery.

According to practitioners who attended an NLP-funded training workshop, the training has literally changed their teaching strategies with individuals presenting learning disabilities and made them more effective in the classroom.

According to key informants from NLP, capacity building of funded organisations is one of the key contributions of the program. In particular, the NLP has helped create, develop and maintain seven national organisations: the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL), the *Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF)*, Frontier College, Laubach Literacy Canada, ABC Canada, the National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA), and NALD, as well as provincial literacy coalitions in each province.

> "Before the NLP was created, the literacy community was not well coordinated, had an underdeveloped voice, and conducted limited advocacy efforts. Since the NLP's inception, a literacy strategy has been developed in every province and territory, and members of the literacy community have learned to work with federal and provincial governments." (*Key Informant from NLP*).

NLP funds have also encouraged, supported and enabled the creation of key partnerships and the development of networks that have increased the capacity and stability of the recipient organisations and leveraged additional financial and in-kind resources for their NLP-funded projects.

Practitioners who benefited from of an NLP-funded project felt that it provided a valuable opportunity to experiment with an alternative way of engaging First Nations students in learning activities that are culturally relevant and meaningful.

Some examples of initial capacity building of funded organisations reported as part of organisation case studies include the following:

- NLP funding has had a significant influence on the capacity of Operation Go Home to offer educational programming for youth dealing with homelessness. One major outcome of the project is that Operation Go Home was able to secure long-term and ongoing support from the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board.
- The Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia reported that NLP funds provided for the *2006 Workplace Practitioners' Institute* enabled them to leverage a further $31,000 from the provincial Department of Education, as well as in-kind support from more than twenty-five businesses.

NLP funding gave the Further Education Society of Alberta (FESA) more visibility, credibility and recognition at the provincial and national levels, thereby opening doors for further activities and partnerships and for wider implementation of its program. The multi-year contribution funding enabled FESA to plan strategically for the long term, to build durable partnerships, and to ensure some continuity within its human resources.

Moreover, a majority of funding recipients surveyed (82% out of 191) indicated that without the funding, their project would have been cancelled or deferred until funding could be found. Only 7% (14 out of 191) said the project would have gone ahead with a reduced scope. As shown in Table 4, approximately 80% of the surveyed funding recipients indicated that the NLP had increased their organisation's capacity a lot (53% out of 191) or somewhat (27% out of 191).

Table 4
Perceived Contribution of the NLP to Organisational Capacity Building

Extent to which the NLP contributed to increasing the funding recipient's capacity	Percent of Respondents
Not at all	2.6%
A little	5.8%
Somewhat	27.2%
A lot	52.9%
Don't know/no response	5.2%
Not applicable	6.3%
Total	100.0%
Number of respondents	**191**

While several examples of NLP impacts on capacity building of literacy practitioners were provided through organisation and project case studies, Table 5 shows that, when asked about the contribution to the development of qualified trainers or facilitators, only 59% (out of 191) of surveyed funding recipients indicated that the NLP had contributed a lot or somewhat; 20% (out of 191) of surveyed funding recipients said that this type of outcome was not applicable to their project.

Table 5
Perceived Contribution of the NLP to Practitioner Capacity Building

Extent to which the NLS contributed to the development of qualified trainers and facilitators	Percent of Respondents
Not at all	5.2%
A little	10.5%
Somewhat	26.2%
A lot	32.5%
Don't know/no response	5.8%
Not applicable	19.9%
Total	100.0%
Number of respondents	**191**

The most frequently mentioned impacts of the funded projects on literacy practitioners by case studies respondents were their increased capacity to serve their clientele, most notably through partnership building and networking opportunities, as well as increased access to relevant training tools and best practices. Conferences and workshops, in particular, provided practitioners with opportunities for networking and for face-to-face, open discussions with their peers, thus offsetting the isolation some of them experienced working in remote, rural areas. Due to their enhanced skills, practitioners report increased self-confidence and being better able to meet their communities' needs. Importantly, some projects increased the capacity of practitioners to attempt alternative approaches to learning.

Some examples of initial capacity building of literacy practitioners reported as part of project and organisation case studies include the following:

- Practitioners agreed that the assessment tool and workshops offered as part of a project on learning disabilities were well-researched, well-organized, and extremely useful resources. One practitioner described that using the tool has helped to lessen the frustration she often felt at the fact that she is not well trained in learning disabilities.

- Practitioners who took part in a research project spoke highly of the value of being exposed to the academic world, learning about the design and process of a large research project, and the added credibility it gave their work and their organisation.

- Practitioners who attended a workplace literacy training event reported that it gave them new tools, resources and best practices to apply with learners; a renewed desire to pursue further professional development and certification; and an awareness of new trends and research in the field.

Evaluation Question: To what degree can HRSDC report on the literacy models and programs targeting families in Official Language Minority Communities?

The NLP administrative database shows that 16 projects were funded under the Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) Family Literacy Initiative between 2003-2004 and 2005-2006, for a total of $1,878,980. Fourteen of them started in 2004-2005 and are intended to last until 2008. All projects are national contributions, except for three grants. Projects cover all provinces and territories except Quebec, Manitoba and Nunavut. Funding was awarded to the *Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF),* tasked with coordinating the work of the newly created national *Réseau d'experts en alphabétisation familiale,* and to umbrella literacy organisations in each province/territory. Project descriptions indicate that funding was targeted towards the development of networks, organisational and programming capacity, research, and promotion of family literacy in each of the provinces and at the national level through the work of the FCAF. This is consistent with the focus intended by the Family Literacy Initiative. The NLP database does not, however, provide information on the progress or outcomes of the projects to date.

One project case study was conducted on a project funded by the NLP under the Initiative, *L'Alphabétisation familiale en français au Nouveau-Brunswick - une démarche globale ancrée dans les communautés* implemented by the *Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick (FANB).* The case study illustrated the relevance of NLP support for professional development of literacy practitioners in Francophone minority communities and showed some positive preliminary outcomes of this training in terms of improved techniques and training approaches by practitioners and administrators in the field of family literacy.

It is, however, too early to draw conclusions on the success of this initiative, given that funded projects remain in the early stages of their implementation.

3.4 Other Evaluation Issues – Turned Towards the Future

Whether sufficient data was collected to inform an eventual summative evaluation: This issue was partially covered in the *Performance Measurement* section.

An eventual summative evaluation would benefit from data on the products and, if still desirable, on end-users of the projects funded by the program. This data was not systematically collected and recorded by the program.

Changes to logic model: In response to the 2002 evaluation recommendation to make achievement of NLP objectives more measurable by clarifying program definitions, objectives and targets, the Governance Network was tasked with revising the program logic model as part of the interim and summative evaluation strategy for the NLS. The document states that the revisions were made to ensure that it "better reflects its foundation as a partnership based model and therefore clearly identifies that the NLS is one of many players contributing to improving literacy skills of Canadians."[24] The context for this recommendation and subsequent change to the logic model stems for the program's difficulty

[24] The Governance Network. National Literacy Secretariat Draft Interim and Summative Evaluation Strategy. February 2005.

in demonstrating the impacts of its activities on literacy levels of Canadians due to its indirect link to literacy learners.

The resulting revised logic model (presented in Appendix E) provides a clear picture of the linkages between program activities and intended outputs and outcomes, and defines outcomes that the program can be held accountable for within its field of federal government jurisdiction. However, while this revision of the program logic model constitutes a first step in facilitating measurement of objectives achievement, this change appears insufficient to fully address the 2002 evaluation recommendation because the program did not develop specific targets to guide measurement.

Whether new data collection requirements and methodologies have been put into place to ensure that both short and long-term outcomes, including changes made since the 2002 evaluation, can be measured: This issue was covered in the *Performance Measurement* section.

3.5 Performance Regarding 2002 Management Commitments

More transparent funding decisions: This issue was partially covered in the *Approach to determining funding priorities* sub-section.

However, survey of funding recipients shows that approximately only a half (57% out of 191) of the respondents were satisfied with the transparency of the proposal review process while 16% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. The majority of representatives consulted through organisation case studies declared not being aware of the proposal review criteria and process used for distributing funding by NLP.

Increasing the accessibility of projects and project results: This issue was covered in the *Accessibility and dissemination of tools and materials* sub-section.

Simplifying the funding application process: During the 2002 evaluation, smaller organisations and those less familiar with the NLS indicated that the NLP application process needs to be simplified and streamlined. In its management response, HRSDC stated that NLS was currently making the funding application available on the web and providing simpler instructions for the process. In addition a more transparent process was being developed by putting in place calls for proposals.

The intended changes were brought to the NLP application process. The application form was made available on the NLP website and all organisations contained in the NLP database were mailed an application package containing instructions on how to submit an application. Funded organisations consulted as part of case studies generally expressed satisfaction with the application process, describing it as streamlined and straightforward. Seventy-one percent (135 out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the simplicity of the funding application process, while 14% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Steps taken to increase the reliability and credibility of local research projects: The 2002 evaluation found that, while major research projects conducted through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and Statistics Canada ensure high quality and reduce the risk of being duplicative through peer review mechanisms, NLP-funded research ran the risk of duplicating work done in other regions/communities. In addition, more than one-half of the provincial and territorial key informants interviewed as part of the 2002 evaluation felt that there was insufficient program monitoring and accountability on the FPT funding stream to ensure the quality of products. Furthermore, the evaluation concluded that needs assessment projects funded under the FPT stream may lack the rigour necessary to be considered "applied research" and that the application of a formal peer review process for all research conducted would help increase quality and help reduce the risk of duplication. One recommended change was to implement a peer review process for the evaluation of research project funding applications.

In response, HRSDC pointed out that "the research projects largely include local needs assessment and project evaluations which would not be duplicated since they are geared to specific populations and projects." Nevertheless, in order to address the issue of quality and reliability, the NLS committed to put in place specific templates and/or protocols to be used uniformly for this type of research and to complete a review of "all the research projects that have been funded over the past five years to synthesize the information and look at improved review processes."

No evidence was found of specific templates and/or protocols put in place to ensure the quality and reliability of NLP-funded research projects. As intended, a review was published by Ralph St.Clair in September 2004 on NLP-funded research reports, entitled *Building a Community: Reviewing National Literacy Secretariat Research Support 1998-2003*. This report concluded that:

> "[t]he contributions of the NLS to literacy research in Canada have been extremely valuable. They have allowed a lot of research to take place that otherwise would not have been feasible, and have created a body of new knowledge. By tackling the issues of research currently facing most research funders and tightening the definition of their purpose and process, the NLS has the opportunity to support even more valuable endeavours in the future."[25]

The report highlighted a number of areas requiring improvement, including:

- insufficient explanations of research method in proposals;
- insufficient demonstration of previous work on the proposed research topics and how the proposed projects will contribute to the overall body of work;
- insufficient thematic targeting of research projects approved, reducing their potential for deeper understanding of key issues;

[25] Ralph St.Clair. *Building a Community: Reviewing National Literacy Secretariat Research Support 1998-2003.* September 2004.

- absence of a policy on funding organisational reviews and needs assessments, such projects using resources without clear benefits for the wider field but being vital for the survival of particular organisations; and

- absence of a policy on who conducts research, allowing consultants to complete the majority of the research at the expense of research capacity building of the community.

No evidence was found that the NLP has implemented changes to its funding of research projects to address these conclusions or the 2002 evaluation recommendations.

Increasing the usage of contributions: In response to a departmental directive and a 2002 summative evaluation recommendation to increase the accountability of NLP funded projects, an informal guideline was established in 2002 for contributions to be used for funding given to national organisations (except for the National Indigenous Literacy Association) and for projects of $350,000 or more, with the aim of reaching a proportion of 22% contributions. Table 6 outlining NLP administrative data shows that the proportion of NLP funding given through contributions has increased to 22% in 2004-2005, up from 5% in 2003-2004. However, the proportion of projects approved as contributions was only 11% in 2004-2005, representing approximately half of the NLP's intended target.

Table 6
Projects And Amount Approved by Funding Mechanism and Fiscal Year: Percentage Distribution

	Fiscal Year							
Funding Mechanism	**1997-1998**	**1998-1999**	**1999-2000**	**2000-2001**	**2001-2002**	**2002-2003**	**2003-2004**	**2004-2005**
Total Funding Approved								
Contributions	21.0%	13.8%	15.8%	9.4%	10.1%	7.1%	5.3%	22.3%
Grants	79.0%	86.2%	84.2%	90.6%	89.9%	92.9%	94.7%	77.7%
Projects Approved								
Contributions	6.9%	0.8%	0.9%	0.4%	0.4%	1.1%	4.5%	10.8%
Grants	93.1%	99.2%	99.1%	99.6%	99.6%	98.9%	95.5%	89.2%

Key informants from NLP expressed concerns with the additional delays and workload imposed on NLP staff by the increased use of contributions: the contribution application process requires more detailed information and the approval process is longer.

Developing a framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy: In its Management Response to the 2002 summative evaluation, the NLS committed to developing a framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy. This commitment followed the Government of Canada's response to "Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need For A Pan-Canadian Response", where it identified the NLS as a key mechanism through which the Canadian government would contribute to the concerted effort to address literacy issues in Canada. In October 2005, the Movement for Canadian Literacy, in consultation with six other National Literacy Organisations, issued its report "A 10-year Results-Based National Literacy Action Plan 2006-2016". This report presented a concrete action plan, from the perspective of the non-government literacy sector, for addressing Canada's literacy

challenges. This report was followed, in November 2005, by the report "Towards a Fully Literate Canada. Achieving National Goals through a Comprehensive Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy" presented by the Advisory Committee on Literacy and Essential Skills to the Minister of State for Human Resources Development. This report endorsed the Action Plan presented by the seven national literacy organisations, stated that "a comprehensive Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy does not yet exist", and called upon the Federal Government "to take an immediate leadership role in the development of a comprehensive Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy", thereby reiterating the commitment made by the NLS in 2004. This report proposed a vision statement, goals, principles, and strategic objectives for the implementation of a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy. As such, this document could be construed as a "framework" for such a strategy. No evidence was found that the proposed framework or any of the reports' recommendations were to date adopted or implemented.

4. Key Conclusions

This section contains the key conclusions developed from the findings of the interim evaluation of the National Literacy Program (NLP).

4.1 Relevance

Program Consistency with Needs and Priorities

Evidence shows that the NLP's support to developing literacy awareness, programming and access across Canada is compatible with both the federal government and Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC's) priorities pertaining to inclusive participation of all Canadians in our new learning society and knowledge-based economy.

While the program does not address literacy stakeholders' expressed need for long-term core funding of literacy programming, it provides funding for coordination and networking, awareness and promotion, and research, areas literacy stakeholders identified as needing federal government support. The allocation of NLP funds is compatible with the varied needs of the literacy community given its responsive partnership approach to setting funding priorities and the flexible definition of its five activity areas: Learning Materials, Access and Outreach, Coordination and Information, Public Awareness, and Research. Also, there appears to be few alternative sources of funding, in the areas examined, for literacy capacity building, coordination and program development. As such, the NLP plays a unique and necessary role.

Relevance of Federal Government Role in Literacy

Overall, evidence shows that a need remains for federal government intervention in the field of adult literacy, particularly as an initiator, promoter and supporter of national initiatives and innovative partnerships among various stakeholders. The NLP's contribution to literacy appears to be compatible and complementary to the role played by provinces, this complementarity being ensured by the effective partnership approach adopted. In this sense, this program does not appear to be a candidate for realignment with the provinces.

4.2 Implementation

Program Utilization and Reach

Some evidence shows that the NLP's direct interventions reach a wide variety of stakeholders, particularly local literacy organisations, non-profit service organisations and indirectly through funded project outputs, literacy practitioners and learners, including youth, families, and seniors from various Canadian provinces. The program has taken a responsive approach to addressing local literacy needs and, as such, did not set specific targets for the reach of its activities. Furthermore, no data is being collected by the program on the actual end-users of NLP-funded activities, thereby preventing an accurate assessment of its reach.

Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Program eligibility criteria are clearly outlined in the application package and neither NLP representatives nor funding recipients expressed having particular issues with this component of program implementation.

In the short-term, the NLP aims to achieve: 1) enhanced literacy research in identified priority areas; 2) improved dissemination and sharing of information among literacy stakeholders; 3) increased availability of adult literacy materials and tools by learners and practitioners; 4) greater awareness of literacy programs, services and issues among targeted sectors; 5) improved access to literacy skills by Canadians with low literacy skills; and 6) improved strategic partnerships involved in literacy issues. NLP's approach appears to be appropriate for achieving these outcomes given that it funds projects in each of the first five categories. Achievement of the sixth is ensured by the program's requirement that funding applicants secure additional project funding and support from partners. Furthermore, the NLP has adopted a responsive approach to establish more precise project selection criteria, within the first five outcome categories. These criteria are based on local needs and priorities and established in collaboration with each province/territory. While NLP and PEI government representatives find this approach to establishing project selection criteria appropriate, given jurisdictional realities, funding recipients from organisation case studies were generally unaware of the process, thereby indicating that the program could be more explicit in its information regarding the program. In the same way, only 57% (out of 191) of funding recipient survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the transparency of the proposal review process and 54% with the timeliness of the funding approval process.

Performance Measurement

Although the NLP collects information that could be used to assess the performance of the projects it funds, it does not currently have a specific set of performance measures against which the results of its activities and funded projects could be assessed, thereby limiting NLP's performance measurement and reporting capacity. Furthermore, the program does not have a system in place to store and use project performance information. In the absence of such a system, the NLP has limited ability to measure and report on whether it is achieving its objectives. The decision not to pursue initial steps to implement a performance measurement system was attributed in part to Senior Management's desire to focus on the new ALLESP, for which a performance measurement system is being developed.

No evidence was found that performance evidence is being used for program or management decision-making purposes on an ongoing basis.

4.3 Success

Achievement of NLP Objectives

Evidence shows that the NLP is contributing to meeting its objectives of supporting the production and utilisation of quality and useful literacy tools and materials, improvements in accessibility and dissemination of literacy services and resources, the application of literacy best practices, and the creation of strategic partnerships.

Observed NLP project outputs included a variety of literacy tools and materials (e.g. training manuals, assessment tools, online training programs, simple language learner materials, bulletins, etc.), research reports, partnerships with other organisations, and awareness raising and promotional events and products.

A majority of project outputs are considered good quality and highly useful by practitioner end-users consulted as part of case studies, including culturally relevant training materials that make use of concrete examples and clear and simple language, while some products are seen by literacy experts to present low quality and relevance. The 2002 evaluation had identified limitations in the reliability and credibility of local research. An NLS-commissioned research reviewing NLP-funded research reports from 1998 to 2003 concluded that the NLS had contributed substantially to literacy education in Canada through its research function but that improvements could still be made, among others, in detailing the research methodology and drawing linkages to other research work. Similar concerns were expressed by some experts with regards to a sample of research reports examined. No evidence was found that the NLP's approach to funding research projects was modified following this study or to address the 2002 evaluation recommendations.

However, end-user survey and case study results showed that NLP-funded products are being used by a wide variety of individuals, including literacy professionals and learners, for a wide range of purposes including improving current literacy training practices and developing new literacy training programs and tools. Strategic partnerships, for leveraging additional funding and/or for sharing expertise and resources, are also a key feature of all projects examined.

There was weaker evidence of NLP-funded activities contributing to increased public awareness and learner participation, in part due to the absence of data on the number and profile of project end-users. This lack of data can be attributed to the fact that the NLP does not have a performance measurement system in place but also to the fact that the NLP only has indirect access to project end-users and that project funding recipients are reluctant to disclose end-user contact information for confidentiality reasons.

Some limitations were also found in the NLP's mechanisms to promote accessibility and dissemination of tools and materials. While the program expects projects to disseminate their project results and encourages posting of funded products on NALD and various provincial literacy websites, evidence shows that this is not systematically done and the NLP does not have a formal mechanism for rolling up the lessons learned and best practices developed by its funded projects for the benefit of all literacy stakeholders.

Initial Learner Impacts

In the absence of specific data on the learners who benefited from NLP-funded products, anecdotal evidence was collected from funded organisations and from literacy practitioners who witnessed first hand the impacts of these products on a variety of individuals. While not every project examined entailed impacts on learners, some examples recorded include improvement of studying and literacy skills among youth and increased motivation to return to school, which led to completion of high school or school credits for several. Some parents went on to complete high school as a result of family literacy activities. Immigrants improved their ability to function effectively in every day situations and were prompted to seek further education. Seniors developed their ability to speak in

groups, to use the Internet, and to write stories. A common thread across these examples is the increased confidence in learning and self-esteem gained by learners as part of their literacy activities.

Initial Capacity Building

Stronger evidence was collected of the NLP's contribution to capacity building of funded organisations and of the literacy field in general, and to professional development of literacy practitioners. The NLP's support to national literacy organisations, its influence in promoting new emerging areas such as workplace and family literacy, and its support and encouragement for the creation of strategic partnerships have been recognized by NLP managers, PEI government representatives, as well as funding recipients and their project partners. A majority of funding recipients surveyed also reported that their project would not have been implemented without NLP funding.

Examples of positive impacts of NLP funding on funded organisations include the ability to secure long-term and ongoing funding and support from other sources; increased visibility, credibility and recognition of the organisation at the provincial and national levels, thereby opening doors for further activities and partnerships, and for wider implementation of its programs; and stabilisation of the organisation's finances, thereby allowing longer-term planning and better retention of its human resources.

The most frequently mentioned impacts of the funded projects on literacy practitioners were their increased capacity to serve their clientele, most notably through partnership building and networking opportunities, as well as increased access to relevant training tools and best practices. Conferences and workshops, in particular, provided practitioners with opportunities for networking and for face-to-face, open discussions with their peers, thus offsetting the isolation they experienced working in remote, rural areas. With the enhancement of their skills, practitioners consulted as part of case studies report that they have enjoyed increased confidence and are better able to meet their communities' needs.

Targeting of Families in Official Language Minority Communities

Sixteen projects were funded under the Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) Family Literacy Initiative between 2003-2004 and 2005-2006. However, it remains too early to draw conclusions on the success of this initiative, given that funded projects remain in the early stages of their implementation. Project descriptions indicate that funding was targeted towards the development of networks, organisational and programming capacity, research, and promotion of family literacy in each of the provinces and at the national level through the work of the FCAF. This is consistent with the focus intended by the Family Literacy Initiative.

4.4 Other Evaluation Issues – Turned Towards the Future

Whether Sufficient Data Was Collected to Inform an Eventual Summative Evaluation

An eventual summative evaluation would benefit from data on the products and, if still desirable, on end-users of the projects funded by the program. This data was not systematically collected and recorded by the program.

Changes To Logic Model

Intended revisions have been made to the program logic model, better reflecting the linkages between its activities and expected outcomes and proposing outcomes that better reflect the program's levels of accountability. However, in order to fully meet the intent of these changes, which is to make achievement of NLP objectives more measurable, the program would have needed to approve performance indicators and targets for each of the expected outcomes.

Requirements and Methodologies in Place to Ensure Measurability of Outcomes

As mentioned, a performance measurement system is not in place to ensure measurability of the program outcomes. This system would have required detailed performance measures and a mechanism for systematically collecting information on project outputs and, if possible and desirable, on end-users.

4.5 Performance Regarding 2002 Management Commitments

More Transparent Funding Decisions

Feedback collected from funding recipients indicates that the process for making funding decisions is unknown to many and an aspect of the program's implementation garnering one of the lowest satisfaction ratings.

Increasing the Accessibility of Projects Results

While the NLP has put in place a number of measures to increase accessibility of project results, posting of project outputs on NALD and other provincial websites is not systematically done and the NLP does not have a formal mechanism for rolling up the lessons learned and best practices developed by its funded projects for the benefit of all literacy stakeholders.

Simplifying the Funding Application Process

Improvements were brought to the NLP application process, namely the posting of application forms and instruction on the NLP website, which appear to have addressed a majority of funding recipients' concerns in this respect. Seventy-one percent (out of 191) of funding recipients surveyed said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the simplicity of the funding application process, while 14% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Steps Taken To Increase the Reliability and Credibility of Local Research Projects

Although a study was commissioned by the NLP to examine the research reports funded between 1998 and 2003, no evidence was found that the NLP has implemented changes to its approach in funding research projects to increase their reliability and credibility.

Increasing the Usage of Contributions

The NLP has established an informal guideline for contributions to be used for funding given to national organisations (except for the National Indigenous Literacy Association) and for projects of $350,000 or more, with the aim of reaching a proportion of 22% contributions. The proportion of contribution projects has increased to 11% in 2004-2005, while the proportion of contribution funding has increased to 22%. However, there is no evidence that the shift operated towards increased use of contributions has had the intended effect of increasing project accountability. It has however increased the administrative burden on both NLP staff and funding recipients, while increasing the length of the project approval process.

Developing a Framework for a Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy

A framework for a pan-canadian literacy strategy was presented in November 2005 as part of the report "Towards a Fully Literate Canada. Achieving National Goals through a Comprehensive Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy", thereby addressing the NLS commitment made in its Management Response to the 2002 summative evaluation. No evidence was found, however, that the proposed framework or any of the reports' recommendations were to date adopted or implemented.

Appendix A
Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Matrix			
Evaluation Issue	**Key Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Methodologies**
Rationale and Relevance			
Rationale and Relevance (continuing need and emerging needs)	1. Are the objective, activities, outputs and desired outcomes of the NLP consistent with departmental, public policy, literacy community, and public needs and priorities? 2. Is there a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this program area or activity? Is the program a candidate for realignment with the provinces?	• The level of consistency between NLP objectives, activities, outputs and desired outcomes and departmental, public policy, literacy community, and public needs and priorities, as identified by available literature and statistics. • Views of partners and stakeholders regarding whether the NLP's objective, activity areas, outputs and desired outcomes are consistent with literacy community needs and priorities.[26] • Views of partners and stakeholders regarding the legitimacy and necessity of the federal government's role in improving the literacy skills of Canadians. • Views of partners and stakeholders and content of literacy research and statistics regarding the continued need for NLP interventions. • Views of partners and stakeholders regarding the relevance of NLP's activities and funding priorities.	• Document and Research Review • Key informant interviews • Survey • Expert/Delphi panel

[26] "Partner" refers to those individuals or groups that the NLS works with on a collaborative basis, such as provincial governments and national literacy organisations. "Stakeholder" refers to those individuals or groups that have an interest in NLS activities and outcomes. This could include literacy experts, researchers, and practitioners.

Evaluation Matrix *(continued)*			
Evaluation Issue	**Key Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Methodologies**
Implementation			
Program Utilization and Reach	3. To what extent do NLP interventions reach targeted stakeholders and learners?[27]	• # of grants and contributions distributed by target group, activity area, region, project type, amount, and duration. • # and profile of actual funding recipients and beneficiaries in comparison to total targeted population of funding recipients and beneficiaries.	• NLP database review • Survey • Case studies
Program Implementation, Efficiency and Effectiveness	4. Are eligibility criteria clear and well understood? 5. Is the current approach to determining priorities and distributing funding the most efficient and effective way for NLP to achieve its objective?	• Views of partners and stakeholders regarding the clarity of eligibility criteria. • Level of satisfaction of partners, staff and stakeholders regarding the way in which priorities are determined and funding is distributed in terms of efficiency and effectiveness given jurisdictional and fiscal realities. • Linkage of funding decisions with immediate outcomes. • Linkage of funding decisions with target groups. • Whether or not funded projects receive additional funding in order to achieve original project objectives. • Whether or not the NLS is able to deliver the NLP within budget and meet TBS and HRSDC accountability requirements.	• NLP database review • Key informant interviews • Case studies • Survey

[27] Learner" refers to those individuals who have the potential to benefit from literacy services.

Evaluation Matrix *(continued)*			
Evaluation Issue	**Key Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Methodologies**
Implementation ***(continued)***			
Performance Measurement	6. Are performance measurement systems and monitoring strategies adequate to support the NLP in achieving its objective? 7. Is performance information being used for decision-making purposes on an ongoing basis?	• Level of understanding of, and compliance with, NLP performance reporting requirements by partners and stakeholders. • Effectiveness of systems to manage both grants and contributions including achievement of objectives and quality assurance of outputs. • Appropriateness of performance indicators and targets given partner and stakeholder realities and NLP intended outcomes. • Application of performance information to make funding decisions. • Application of performance information to improve its internal systems and approach to achieving its objective.	• NLP database review • Case studies • Key informant interviews • Survey

Evaluation Matrix *(continued)*			
Evaluation Issue	**Key Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Methodologies**
Success			
Achievement of NLP Objectives (including outputs and immediate outcomes)	8. Has the NLP made progress toward achieving its objectives in each of its targeted activity areas?	• # of research projects/materials/tools funded by identified priority areas; quality assessment of research/materials/tools; usefulness of research/materials/tools; evidence of utilization of research results/materials/tools. • Best practices are exhibited in the literacy field. • Partners and stakeholders share and/or receive literacy information. • Literacy materials and tools are developed and available to learners and stakeholders. • Public awareness activities are linked to increased program participation. • # of learners accessing literacy programming. • Strategic partnerships are created through NLP interventions and are active in addressing literacy issues. • Level of acknowledgement and support of partners and stakeholders for the NLP's role in facilitating the creation of successful partnerships and achieving its immediate outcomes.	• NALD review • Key informant interviews • Survey • Case studies • Expert/Delphi Panel

Evaluation Matrix *(continued)*			
Evaluation Issue	**Key Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Methodologies**
Success ***(continued)***			
Initial learner impacts	9. Does the NLP contribute to the achievement of stronger literacy skills or other impacts among learners?	• Literacy skills of learners in NLP funded, or partially funded, initiatives (i.e., improved reading or numeracy skills). • Learners in NLP funded, or partially funded, initiatives have experienced unintended impacts (i.e., improved ability to participate in day-to-day activities).	• Case studies • Survey
Initial capacity building	10. Does the NLP contribute to increased capacity among stakeholders?	• Use of materials, tools or research supported by NLP to develop and improve adult literacy programming. • Use of best practices to develop and improve adult literacy programming. • Views of stakeholders regarding whether or not they have built capacity partially through the influence of NLP funded initiatives.	• Case studies • Survey • Key informant interviews

Appendix B
Project Case Studies

Profile of Cases selected for Project Case Studies									
			Funding stream		Activity field				
Name of Organisation	**Location**	**Project Title**	**No.**	**Description**	**No.**	**Description**	**Start Date**	**End Date**	**$ Approved (in 000s)**
Canadian Automotive Repair & Service Council	ON	Basic Snowmobile Maintenance for First Nations	75	National Contribution	627	Learning Materials	11/01/04	03/31/06	$100-$250
Home Instruction For Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	BC	Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Canada Secretariat	73	National Grant	626	Access & Outreach	11/03/03	10/31/05	$100-$250
Nokee Kwe Occupational Skill Development Inc.	ON	To Strengthen the Learning Circles	73	National Grant	625	Coordination & Information	03/01/03	08/31/04	$250-$500
Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française	PQ	*Stage national de perfectionnement en alphabétisation*	73	National Grant	627	Learning Materials	06/09/04	03/31/05	$25-$50
Centre For Family Literacy Society Of Alberta	AB	Next Steps: Foundational Training in Family Literacy	75	National Contribution	625	Coordination & Information	10/25/04	09/30/07	$100-$250
Kids R First Family Resource Centre	PEI	Fathering For Literacy	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	627	Learning Materials	09/08/04	09/02/05	$50-$75
Nunavut Literacy Council	NU	Family a community Literacy Development Project	73	Prov./Terr. Grant	626	Access & Outreach	08/18/03	07/09/06	$250-$500
Northwestern Ontario Literacy Network	ON	Regional Training Event - May 2004	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	625	Coordination & Information	11/01/03	07/30/04	$25-$50
Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick	NB	*L'alphabétisation familiale en français au Nouveau-Brunswick - une démarche globale ancrée dans les communautés*	75	National Contribution	730	Public Awareness	04/01/04	03/31/08	$500-$1000

Profile of Cases selected for Project Case Studies *(continued)*

			Funding stream		Activity field				
Name of Organisation	**Location**	**Project Title**	**No.**	**Description**	**No.**	**Description**	**Start Date**	**End Date**	**$ Approved (in 000s)**
Collège du savoir (Le)	ON	*Partenaires pour l'action en milieu de travail*	73	National Grant	627	Learning Materials	01/01/04	12/31/04	$50-$75
Ontario Association Of Adult & Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA)	ON	On-Line Professional Development Using a Mentoring Approach	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	627	Learning Materials	07/21/03	10/15/04	$75-$100
Adult Basic Education Association	ON	You've Been Trained in Learning Disabilities - Now What?	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	627	Learning Materials	10/01/04	09/30/05	$10-$25
Partnerships In Learning	ON	Literacy Practices and Media Perceptions of Adults with Low Literacy Skills	73	National Grant	628	Research	11/01/02	12/30/04	$75-$100
School District #62 Sooke West Shore Centre for Learning and Training	BC	Honour the Past, Prepare for the Future	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	627	Learning Materials	09/01/03	06/30/04	$25-$50
Waterloo Region District School Board	ON	Essential Transitions - Preparing LBS Learners for Entry-Level Employment	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	627	Learning Materials	09/08/04	08/30/06	$75-$100
Project L.O.V.E. (Let Older Volunteers Educate)	PEI	Building New Community Partnerships	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	628	Research	07/09/03	06/30/06	$75-$100
Hants Learning Network Association	NS	The Tutor-Learner Connection - TLC Conference	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	625	Coordination & Information	12/01/04	06/10/05	$25-$50
Regina Early Learning Centre Inc.	SK	Mentoring and Capacity Building: Aboriginal PRINTS Family Literacy	74	Prov./Terr. Grant	626	Access & Outreach	09/15/04	09/14/05	$10-$25

Appendix C
Organisation Case Studies

Profile of Selected Organisations for Organisation Case Studies								
Organisation Name	**Organisation Description**	**Location**	**Organisation Type**	**Project Title**	**Total Approved**	**Activity Type**	**Start Date**	**End Date**
One Project 12 months or less								
Operation Go Home	Operation Go Home (OGH) is a national organisation dedicated to helping reunite youth from across Canada with their families. In 2002, in response to the needs expressed by its clients on a local level, OGH developed the Youth Alternative Centre, a downtown Ottawa drop-in for street youth and at-risk youth. In response to clients' needs over the years, OGH developed a number of programs and services: Drop-In, Education, Employment, Outreach and Reunite.	ON	National	Steps and Credits	$80,819	National Grant-Access & Outreach	9-12-2005	9-9-2006
Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia	The Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia (AWENS) is an organisation of workplace education instructors delivering essential skills programs to Nova Scotia workplaces. The goal of the Association is to provide a forum for the promotion and advancement of excellence in instructional practices by creating professional development activities, networking, responding to trends in the field of workplace education and representing the interests of workplace educators.	NS	Provincial	2006 Workplace Education Practitioner Institute	$73,176	National Grant-Coordination & Information	8-16-200	8-15-2006

Profile of Selected Organisations for Organisation Case Studies *(continued)*								
Organisation Name	**Organisation Description**	**Location**	**Organisation Type**	**Project Title**	**Total Approved**	**Activity Type**	**Start Date**	**End Date**
One Project 36 months or more								
The Winnipeg Foundation	The Winnipeg Foundation is a community foundation consisting of 1,400 endowment funds created by individuals and groups to care for the needs of the communities in Manitoba.	MB	Community-Based	Literacy for Life Endowment Challenge	$1,000,000	National Grant-Learning Materials	1-27-2003	3-30-2008
Further Education Society of Alberta	The Further Education Society of Alberta (FESA) is a registered charitable organisation working to pave the way for lifelong learning opportunities for all Canadians by promoting literacy and enhancing parenting skills among multi-barriered and isolated learners and families. In cooperation with grassroots community agencies, it provides curriculum and training for local programming across Canada.	AB	Provincial	*Grandir avec mon enfant* Training Project	$326,954	National Contribution-Access & Outreach	3-14-2003	3-31-2006

Profile of Selected Organisations for Organisation Case Studies *(continued)*								
Organisation Name	**Organisation Description**	**Location**	**Organisation Type**	**Project Title**	**Total Approved**	**Activity Type**	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Multiple Projects in consecutive years								
Nova Scotia Seniors for Literacy Committee	The Nova Scotia Seniors for Literacy Committee was created by Nova Scotia's Seniors' Secretariat in 2000 to help address the literacy needs of older Nova Scotians by producing information and developing resources to help Nova Scotia's Community Learning Networks design meaningful programs and effective learning opportunities for older adults.	NS	Provincial	Cultivating Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Seniors	$50,000	Prov./Terr. Grant-Learning Materials	9-1-2002	12-31-2003
				Enhancing the Literacy Skills of Nova Scotia Seniors using the Seniors Literacy Resource Kit	$56,000	Prov./Terr. Grant-Learning Materials	1-1-2004	12-31-2004
				Preparing a Basic Health Learning Package for Older Adults	$32,872	Prov./Terr. Grant-Learning Materials	10-3-2005	9-29-2006

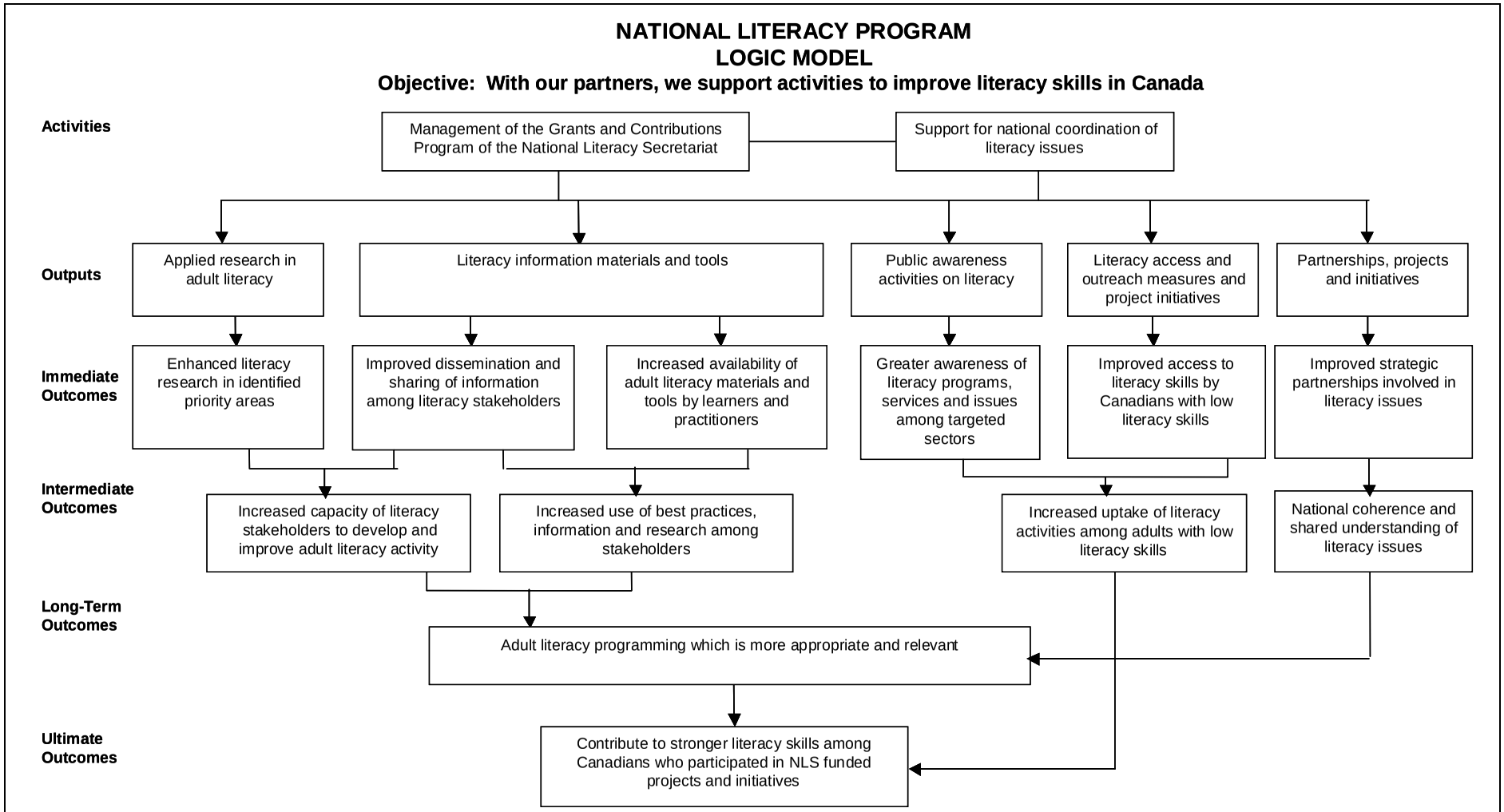
Profile of Selected Organisations for Organisation Case Studies *(continued)*								
Organisation Name	**Organisation Description**	**Location**	**Organisation Type**	**Project Title**	**Total Approved**	**Activity Type**	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Multiple Projects in consecutive years *(continued)*								
Shilo Military Family Resource Centre	The Shilo Military Family Resource Centre, established in 1990, is a non-profit charitable, United Way Member Agency organisation that serves the families of military and civilian employees of Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Shilo and the families residing in the Rural Municipalities of Cornwallis, North Cypress and South Cypress in Manitoba.	MB	Community-Based	Family Literacy Foundational Training	$29,047	Prov./Terr. Grant-Access & Outreach	8-9-2002	4-30-2003
				Professional Development Training for Family Literacy Practitioners	$80,000	Prov./Terr. Grant-Learning Materials	8-4-2003	8-1-2005
				Development & Pilot of an Assessment Tool of Learner Outcomes for Family Literacy Programs	$56,500	Prov./Terr. Grant-Learning Materials	9-15-2004	9-14-2006

Appendix D
Expert Panel Products

List of Products Reviewed by Expert Panel					
No.	**Product Name**	**Type of Product**	**Description**	**Funded Organisation**	**Project Title**
1	*Alpha au boulot*	Tool	Training manual in French for workplace literacy trainers	*Le Collège du savoir, Ontario*	*Partenaires pour l'action en milieu de travail*
2	*Défendre nos droits*	Tool	Simple language information document in French on learners' rights	*Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec, Québec*	*Pratiques et politiques: enjeux internes et externes*
3	*Guide de la personne tutrice bénévole*	Tool	Training manual in French for volunteer literacy trainers	The Frontier College, Ontario	Frontier College: An Integrated Community Literacy Resource
4	Storysacks	Tool	Guide and handout materials for implementation of a literacy training workshop	Nunavut Literacy Council, Nunavut	Nunavut Family and Community Literacy Development Project
5	Online Mentoring Tool www.LBSpractitionertraining.com	Tool	Website offering various professional development resources for LBS practitioners	Ontario Assoc. of Adult & Continuing Edu. School Board Administrators, Ontario	Measuring Quality in Mentorship for LBS Practitioner Training Online
6	Connecting Generations of Women Through Literacy	Tool	Basic language training program guide targeting Aboriginal women	North West Regional College, Saskatchewan	Connecting Generations of Women Through Literacy
7	Learning Challenges Assessment Tool	Tool	Assessment resource for the presence of learning challenges in adult literacy learners	Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA), Ontario	You've Been Trained in Learning Disabilities– Now What?
8	Bulletins for LBS Practitioners and Learners	Tool	A series of five bulletins for learners and practitioners of LBS programs in Ontario	Ontario Literacy Coalition, Ontario	Workforce Literacy Resources: Bulletins for LBS Practitioners and Learners

List of Products Reviewed by Expert Panel *(continued)*					
No.	**Product Name**	**Type of Product**	**Description**	**Funded Organisation**	**Project Title**
9	Informal Learning Practices of Adults with Limited Literacy Skills, A Research Summary	Research Report	Summary of ethnographic research on informal learning practices of adults with low literacy skills	Partnership in Learning, Ontario	Literacy Practices and Media Perceptions of Adults with Low Literacy Skills
10	Strategies for Success. Research Results	Research Report	Results of a survey of Manitoba literacy practitioners on their experience with adult learners with learning disabilities	LiteracyWorks, Manitoba	Strategies for Success
11	Exploring Learners' Perspectives on Progress	Research Report	Report on a research exploring learners' experiences and understanding of progress	Parkdale Project Read, Ontario	Exploring Indicators that Support Successful Transitions to Greater Independence: A Research Project

Appendix E
NLP Logic Model



Source: The Governance Network (2005). *National Literacy Secretariat Draft Interim and Summative Evaluation Strategy*. February 2005.